

TRUCK WEST

June 2008 Volume 19, Issue 6

WINNIPEG
TRUCK SHOW
Map & Exhibitors List
Page 31

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A question of health

High-profile truck accident raises some questions

By Jan Westell

EDMONTON, Alta. – A disastrous crash near Edmonton on Mar. 31 that was broadcast from coast-to-coast, and over the Internet has many in the trucking industry questioning medical standards for commercial truck drivers.

A 25-year-old truck driver died in the fiery crash after a 20-kilometre (some reports say 40 km) drive the wrong way down Yellowhead Trail. People close to the driver, Mark Santos, have indicated the bizarre behaviour may have been caused by his well-reported medical affliction: Type 1 diabetes.

Santos' friends, family and co-workers, appear to have known about the condition. Preliminary toxicology reports have more recently indicated diabetes may not have been a factor, according to the *Edmonton Journal* newspaper. Whether it was diabetes or hypoglycemia, Santos' medical fitness to drive a commercial vehicle, has been cast in doubt.

The Alberta Ministry of Transportation is responsible for determining driver fitness and making decisions regarding a person's ability to drive any vehicle. A

Continued on page 11 ■



ENFORCEMENT CONCERNS: Alberta's Transport Minister, Luke Ouellette, said the province has no plans to follow Ontario and Quebec's lead and introduce speed limiter legislation. He cited enforcement concerns for the reluctance to do so.

Alberta Minister not interested in speed limiters

By Jan Westell

BANFF, Alta. – While Ontario and Quebec forge ahead with speed limiter legislation in their respective provinces, Alberta has no plans to follow suit, Luke Ouellette, Minister of Transportation said at the Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA)

management conference.

Ouellette has not changed his stance on speed limiters, which goes against the Canadian Trucking Alliance's stance, to restrict trucks to 105 km/h on provincial highways. While Ontario and Quebec have announced an intention to implement a regulation

requiring all trucks over 11,000 kg to be equipped with speed limiters, Alberta Transportation is not interested.

"I know there are economic and environmental reasons for considering mandatory speed limiters, but I also know it would be

Continued on page 6 ■

Report on maintenance

- Maximizing fuel mileage in the shop
- Rugged computers
- Better brakes
- On-board diagnostics

See pages 32-36



Inside This Issue...

- **Alberta's finest:** We report from the Alberta Motor Transport Association's annual convention, which featured a number of industry awards presentations. Page 9
- **Rate wars:** Rates are being undercut and carriers are going belly-up as a result. A look at how to survive. Pages 24-26
- **Pardon me?:** If you've had a run-in with the law in your past, you may need a waiver to cross the US border. Understanding pardons, waivers and which does what? Page 27
- **Reefer round-up:** A look at what's new with reefers and impending emissions rules in California. Pages 29-30

Mark Dalton O/O



Page 28



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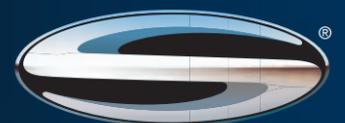


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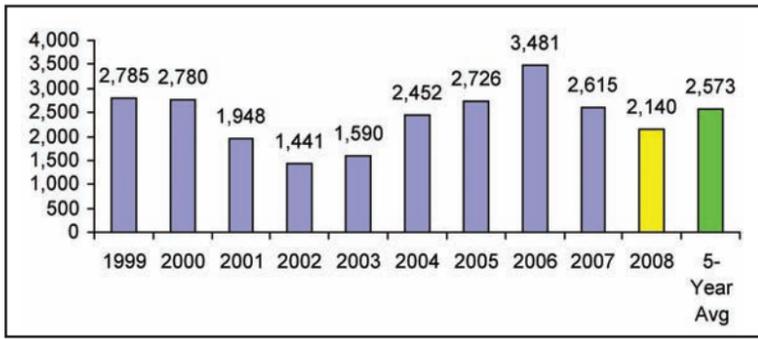
CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

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Monthly Class 8 Sales - Mar 08

OEM	This Month	Last Month
Freightliner	437	567
International	522	515
Kenworth	357	361
Mack	145	161
Peterbilt	229	287
Sterling	179	290
Volvo	178	229
Western Star	93	205
TOTALS	2,140	2,615

Historical Comparison - Mar 08 Sales



Motor Vehicle Production to Jan 08

	Total Prodn	For Export
International	4,444	3,729
Paccar	4,659	3,964
Sterling	17,156	14,563
TOTALS	26,259	22,256

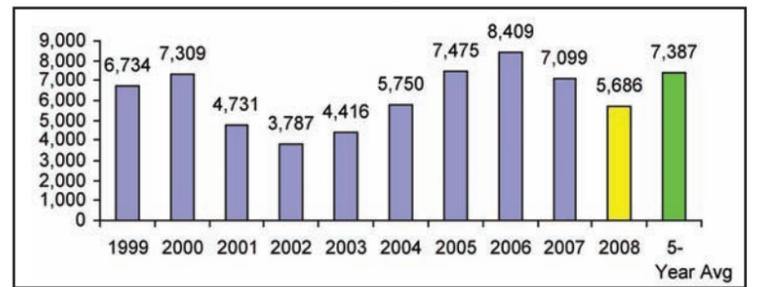
Canadian Class 8 sales have started off quietly, coming in below last year's level and considerably below the record numbers posted in 2006 for each month in the first quarter. That's not surprising considering the impact of the pre-buy strategy many fleets used to avoid purchasing trucks with 2007 engines remains in play. Serious doubts about the economy on both sides of the border are also creating excess capacity. Still sales for March did climb above 2,000 units, avoiding the steep declines of 2001 to 2003.

With the days of coping with parts and materials shortages and record demand for new trucks nothing but a memory, truck manufacturers instead now face continuing to bring their operations in line with the reduced sales. They also are preparing for the next jump in sales volumes as fleets and owner/operators respond to the next round of engine emissions standards in 2010 and the anticipated rebound of the North American economy.

Class 8 Sales (YTD Mar 08) by Province and OEM

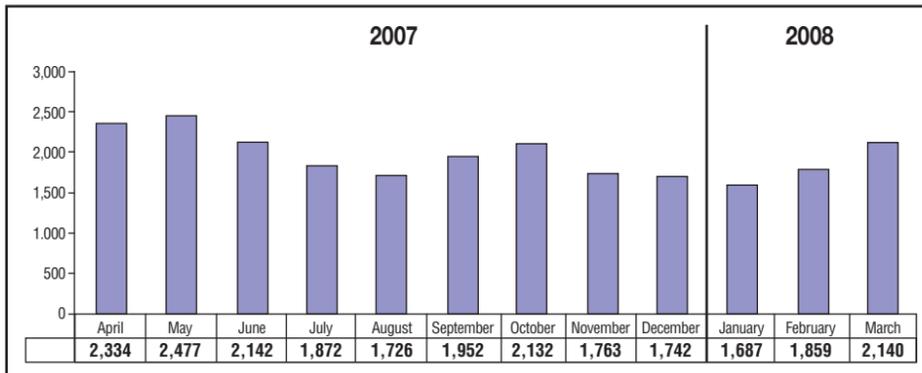
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	107	202	54	90	560	151	40	14	0	0	1,218
International	71	168	29	45	561	311	50	18	0	17	1,270
Kenworth	124	391	50	33	175	202	0	18	0	0	993
Mack	38	42	31	28	134	66	14	16	0	0	369
Peterbilt	71	207	73	40	106	86	68	6	0	0	657
Sterling	38	68	29	14	180	95	4	10	0	2	440
Volvo	28	116	19	52	192	73	15	19	0	1	515
Western Star	61	56	10	7	45	31	5	8	0	1	224
TOTALS	538	1,250	295	309	1,953	1,015	196	109	0	21	5,686

Historical Comparison - YTD



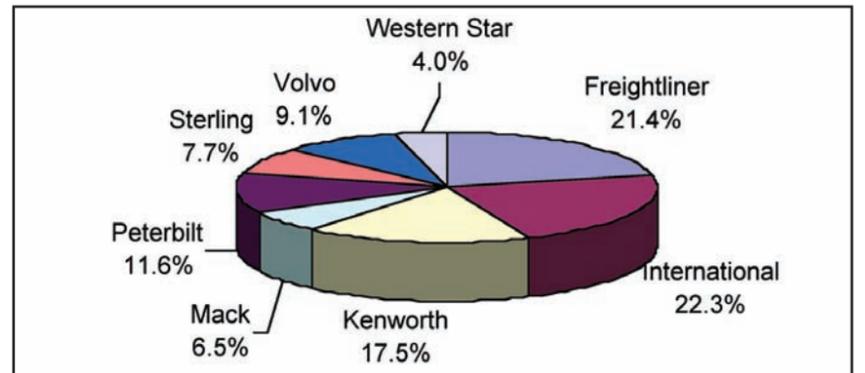
Class 8 sales after the first quarter are at 5,696, which is below last year's less-than-impressive total, way off the record sales posted in the first quarter of 2006 and almost 2,000 units off the five-year average. Currently, 2008 is shaping up as the fourth worst sales year in the past decade as the pre-buy strategy employed by many fleets combined with a slowing North American economy is giving fleets second thoughts about adding capacity.

12 - Month Sales Trends



Monthly total sales never climbed above the 3,000 mark last year, after doing so seven times in the previous record-setting year. It's highly unlikely to see such strong monthly figures this year either. The 2,140 Class 8 trucks sold in March mark the strongest sales so far this year and make for one of the best sales performances of the past 12-month period.

Market Share Class 8 YTD



Last year International wrestled the market share lead from perennial front runner Freightliner and International has jumped out of the starting blocks again with a lead in the first quarter, capturing about 22% of sales. Freightliner's share of sales has improved since the start of the year, however, keeping hard charging Kenworth in third place.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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Speed limiters: Are they really necessary?

When the Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) first announced its intent to usher in a law that would require the use of speed limiters, editorial director Lou Smyrlis and I couldn't agree on the merits of the idea. Here we are two and a half years later, and we are still unable to take a united stand on the subject.

Personally, I question the need for the proposed law. I question the time and resources that has been poured into this initiative. I don't consider speeding trucks to be a major problem on our highways, and as it's written, the law will only really affect speeding on 400-series highways. Dump trucks barreling through yellow lights on secondary highways, in my opinion a more serious threat to road safety, will not be affected.

I also question the potential benefits of the law. I think the environmental impact has been grossly overstated. They are based on the premise that most trucks are running at speeds well over 100 km/h. That's simply not the case anymore.

To be fair, there will be *some* fuel savings once the proposal becomes law. Slowing down obviously saves fuel and even if the law causes a small percentage of the trucks on the road to slow down from speeds above 105 km/h, fuel and emissions savings will be achieved. I just don't think those savings will be as significant as the numbers being touted by OTA and other proponents of the law.

I will also concede that there may be a modest improvement in overall road safety. While I don't think the number of truck crashes will be noticeably reduced as a result of the legislation, there's a chance the



Editorial Comment
James Menzies

severity of some crashes will be lessened. But it'll be nearly impossible to measure this.

While I don't think the speed limiter legislation is needed, and I question the real benefits of the proposed rule, I also don't subscribe to the doomsday scenarios that are feared by many owner/operators and others who continue to resist the proposed law.

I don't think the rule will cause a mass exodus of drivers from the industry. I also don't think roads will become less safe.

I empathize with owner/operators and drivers who are convinced, rightly or wrongly, that their productivity and financial success will be threatened by the law.

There are a lot of drivers who feel this way, and their inability to make fundamental decisions on how to operate their own business is understandably frustrating.

When the OTA first floated its proposal

back in 05, I admittedly didn't think it would get to this point.

But the OTA has pursued this doggedly and has seen it through. It looks like the law will become a reality in Ontario. There's still time to fight it in other jurisdictions.

Having said all that, it's not the first major regulatory change to impact the industry and it most certainly won't be the last. Success is still possible in a post-speed limiter world.

If the law goes through as expected, it may be time to accept the change, however begrudgingly, alter your business operations as required and move forward. □

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Why speed limiters really are necessary

As you can tell from James Menzies' editorial running above mine, the divisiveness over Ontario's proposed speed limiter legislation extends to our newsroom. When the Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) first announced its intent to push for a law that would require the use of speed limiters I, unlike James, did see the need for such legislation.

I still do. The reasons speed limiters make a lot of sense to me have to do with both safety and the environment.

And specifically, the government and public's perception of our industry's willingness to take the lead in being a positive force on both those fronts.

According to the OTA, speed limiting trucks to 105 km/h will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 280 kilotonnes per year.

Now I haven't done the math myself. I don't know if that figure is bang on or way overinflated. But let's just assume that it's overinflated and that greenhouse gas emissions will only be reduced by half that amount.

Keep in mind that transportation activities generate more than one quarter of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions and, just as



Viewpoint
Lou Smyrlis
 Editorial Director

important, the transportation sector is the *fastest-growing* source of greenhouse gas emissions.

And that trucking is the largest emitter among the commercial modes.

Does it make sense for the industry to walk away from a plan that helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions – to whatever degree – when that's a challenge all industries are expected to help in overcoming?

How does it look to politicians and the public when it's reported that truckers don't want to limit their speeds to five kilometres above the speed limit on our largest highways even though they know this will help the environment?

I realize I'm grossly oversimplifying the issue, but that's exactly how the public will see it.

And let's be honest with ourselves, although they may be a minority, there are still enough trucks out there zipping by at 130 km/h to give the industry a

black eye it can do without.

Proponents of speed limiters also say it will improve highway safety.

Again, I'm not sure how much of an effect it would actually have because our highways are already among the safest in North America. But if it can stop the crazies running at 130 km/h (and at the same time complaining about diesel prices), then why not have speed limiter legislation?

Would it be better for an accident to occur involving a truck operating at an excessive speed and to have the general media report the industry was opposed to policing its speed through speed limiters?

When issues become politicized and polarized, it's often at the cost of losing perspective.

I think it's important not to lose sight of the reality that trucking is just one industry among many competing for attention, funding and favourable treatment.

Its perception among government and the public as a good corporate citizen is not only important but will determine how it's dealt with in the future. □

– Lou Smyrlis can be reached by phone at (416) 510-6881 or by e-mail at lou@TransportationMedia.ca.



Transport Minister discusses key infrastructure upgrades

■ **Continued from page 1**
very difficult to enforce.”

Infrastructure funding

During his keynote address, Ouellette pointed out Alberta's Ministry of Transportation will double provincial investment in highway repaving and bridge repair over the next three years, however, he also warned about delays that will likely result from this work this year.

“Highway work will be in full swing throughout the province, including restoring older roads that are nearing the end of their surface life spans,” said Ouellette.

Some of those projects include: construction of a five-lane bridge across the Athabasca River in Fort McMurray; continued twinning of Hwy. 63 near Fort McMur-

ray; (continue) twinning eight km of Hwy. 4 at Milk River; (continue) twinning of Hwy. 21 east of Sherwood Park; extensive construction of Calgary ring road; and construction of the first phase of the Grand Prairie bypass.

Other new Alberta highway projects mentioned by the minister include: continued construction of Dunvegan suspension bridge on Hwy. 2 (oversized vehicles or wide loads are not permitted and will be redirected); replacing the Smoky River bridge on Hwy. 49; (begin) reconstruction of Hwy 625, near Nisku; and (complete) construction of the North Innisfail interchange on Hwy 2 (this fall), and the Hwy. 1 and 9 interchange near Chestermere (by September 2008).

The minister announced plans

to add more rest areas along provincial highways, which are intended to benefit truckers. The project is expected to cost approximately \$100 million over a seven-year period, but is still in financial limbo.

“We've identified the locations for additional rest areas throughout the province, with a particular focus on areas with logging or other resource traffic,” said Ouellette. “Now, we're working on getting the additional budget dollars for construction. This is one of our priorities.”

Use it or lose it

Ouellette also warned about a lack of interest for Alberta's “ground breaking” professional driver certification program, which was developed by the Alberta Ministry

of Transportation, and Alberta Advanced Education, and offered at Red Deer College.

“I remind you that this is a pilot program, and if it's not supported – as the saying goes – use it or lose it. Let's make sure that doesn't happen. I encourage you to send your prospective drivers to this program.”

Edmonton as an inland trade hub

The minister praised a \$1.5 million federal contribution to help launch Edmonton's Port Alberta project, which is aimed at developing that city as a major inland trade and transportation hub, linking Asia and North America through the port of Prince Rupert. Ouellette said that Edmonton is considered to be well positioned to take advantage of “significant trade” coming from China to North America, with the airport a potential cargo processing centre for multiple modes of transportation.

“It will be a designated transshipment zone, so imported goods can move to export without traditional tariffs. On-site warehousing and logistics facilities will service North America's growing trade through NAFTA, and with Asia and Europe. This promises to have positive economic spin-offs for intermodal trucking in the years ahead.”

The Alberta government is enthusiastic about the Trade Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA), which was signed by Alberta and B.C. two years ago. Alberta recently introduced Bill 1 to fully implement the trade deal with B.C. on cross-boundary business and employment issues, said the minister, who noted the agreement will benefit trucking firms through the standardization of regulations in the two provinces.

Non-committal on HoS

Ouellette also addressed hours-of-service, but the minister offered no firm regulatory commitment, and mentioned political concerns on a national level, although he noted that Alberta Transportation is seeking more input from stakeholders.

“I'm a firm believer in the need for effective highway safety programming, but I want to balance all our regulations with the need to enhance industry productivity. I also want to ensure we're doing the right thing for drivers – not just big corporations, but also for the smaller one- and two-truck operators.”

As far as Alberta's Transport Department is concerned, there are issues surrounding the weight threshold for the national rules. At 4,500 kg, the hours-of-service rules would apply to a wide range of drivers – not just professional truck drivers, a Ministry official told *Truck West*. For instance, some welders would be unable to drive home in their service vehicle after a 12-hour shift under the rules. □

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In-cab technologies discussed at AMTA convention

By Jan Westell

BANFF, Alta. – A traditional logbook is a labour-intensive, inefficient, paper-based system, that has outlived its usefulness to the trucking industry, according to Robin Doherty, the president of Verigo Wireless Logbooks.

Doherty was one of four panel members at the Alberta Motor Transport Association convention, speaking about the latest advancements in in-cab technology.

According to Doherty, the electronic logbook has a number of advantages: it has a touch screen for easy data entry, which records changes of duty status and calculates the driving hours (taking into account all the applicable rules).

It also provides the driver with real-time results, and the system is not considered to be complex.

“It’s a real simple system for the drivers to follow,” said Doherty, who spoke about the efficiency benefits of wireless communication systems, in contrast to manual administrative methods that require a driver to: “collect, sort, file, transfer, re-enter data and scrutinize the results.”

Wireless log sheets can be scrutinized for errors and violations on each submission, and detailed audit reports are e-mailed back to the office much faster than the paper process, added Doherty. “Detailed audits are much more efficient; much more effective, and you can do it online. It can all be done online; stored online and e-mailed to the supervisor.”

Another electronic feature discussed at the AMTA in-cab seminar was electronic field ticketing. Field tickets are used for service contracts, safety forms, certification, or any other operational or financial data documented in the field or office. According to Lawrence Gordey of Betach Solutions, paper-based documents are outdated, offer a greater potential for errors and document loss, and look unprofessional when there are multiple corrections. It’s a process that inevitably suffers from multi-data storage locations, which are difficult to access and utilize, he adds.

In contrast, wireless field ticketing offer many advantages, such as: digital documentation, electronic price books, enhanced reporting features, easy access and transmission of information, secure wireless connectivity and more, said Gordey.

“It reduces cost,” he says. “It maximizes utilization of assets. It works to retain staff. It captures proof that the job is done, and the data captured provides for real-time and historical data.”

Wireless ticketing offers reduced administration and another financial benefit, since electronic costs and revenues can be tracked and invoices can be generated much quicker, because data is collected more efficiently. “That’s going to improve cash flow,” said Gordey.

GeoTrac also had a representative on the panel, with CEO

Timothy Hodge promoting the merits of satellite technology, which has the ability to track truck units in the field, whether it’s the transportation, freight forwarding, mining, or the oil and gas industry. The system offers a high-speed modem, a tracking system that is never out of coverage from the satellite modem, and instant messaging.

“E-mails are sent back to the office, with no need to key-in,” said Hodge.

GeoTrac’s system is considered to be cost-effective, because it reduces the need for satellite phones; reduces communication costs; and monitors reckless driving. According to GeoTrac, satellite tracking also increases potential for theft recovery; offers proven fleet productivity improvements; and gives dispatchers

knowledge about local conditions, as well as other electronic documentation benefits.

Motorola was represented on the panel as well, and introduced “complete process improvement coverage,” an electronic integrated method of fleet management, which was presented by representative Ralph Lieberthal.

The Motorola electronic integrated method is a process of monitoring and recording all administrative activities in the vehicle, starting at the outbound depot (the system reviews manifest, records vehicle inspection details, tracks hours, and miles), according to Lieberthal.

The next step is delivery and/or pick-up at the customer site (system records OS&D, collects/records COD, obtains POD signature, communicates status,

and receives next route assignment from dispatch).

The final destination is the inbound depot, and the integrated system can monitor the dock/door assignment; update trip data; update data for warehouse or distribution centre; or update any back office systems, according to Lieberthal.

In addition, the integrated system also monitors driver performance and truck maintenance requirements, and the location of fleet vehicles and trailers, he added.

The Motorola hardware is based on an on-board computer which can be complimented by a handheld device. Two-way communication is achieved through satellite, terrestrial and or Wi-fi technology.

“The marriage of handheld devices and on-board computers is an exciting new development in our industry,” he said. □

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AMTA awards industry's finest

By Jan Westell

BANFF, Alta. – The Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA) held its annual convention in late April, where it took the opportunity to reward some of the industry's finest ambassadors.

Canadian Driver of the Year

A Medicine Hat-based driver with a 33-year career and 3.94 million collision-free miles, has been named the Canadian Trucking Alliance/Volvo Trucks Canada Driver of the Year for 2007.

Perley MacDonald, who drives for McMillan Transport, was presented with the award at the AMTA's annual convention.

"Mr. MacDonald exemplifies the outstanding truck drivers with whom Canadians share the road," said David Bradley, the CEO of the Canadian Trucking Alliance. "It is a great honour to recognize him with this highly-coveted award."

Rod McMillan, the president of McMillan Transport, describes his award-winning employee, as an "old-time trucker," who is easy to work with, and is very generous with his trucking expertise. "He has an amazing sense of humour; is very humble; and is always willing to share his insight and experience with any person that is new to the industry."

McMillan is particularly proud of MacDonald's impressive driving record, as well as other professional attributes that are appreciated by the company. "Perley's dedication to our company and customers is excellent, and greatly appreciated by everyone. Congratulations Perley: everyone at McMillan Transport is very proud of you, and also proud to work with you."

MacDonald transports freight to destinations in Canada's western provinces, and has been repeatedly honoured for driving excellence during his lengthy career.

Provincial Driver of the Year

The AMTA also presented its own provincial Driver of the Year award, to Phil Jellicoe, who has been collision-free for 23 years, and 13 years in a row without a single accident.

According to a tribute made at the AMTA convention, trucking was all Jellicoe ever wanted to do. As soon as he got behind the wheel, he knew he had found his niche. He drove for Whitecourt Transport for 36 out of a total of 40 years in the business, mainly driving city delivery routes in Edmonton.

"He said that while he did a few highway runs throughout his career, (but) his overriding love was city driving, calling it, 'an absolute pleasure,'" said Bradley, the CEO of the CTA, who made the presentation.

"He liked the fact that there was no speed involved – at least on his part – and there was no need to rush, as long as the deliveries made it to their destinations. And after a few years, he got to know the city streets like the proverbial back of

his hand. This enabled him to always be able to take the quickest, yet at the same time, safest routes available."

Recently Jellicoe retired from Whitecourt Transport. Asked what made him such a success at his chosen profession, he replied: "I think you have to love what you are doing. I did and I still do. Behind the wheel, you have to be cool, calm and collected. A nervous, edgy driver will be his own worst enemy. Then, you have to be aware of your surroundings. That is, know your vehicles, loads, routes, the alternate routes and which construction projects are taking place at the time. Armed with this knowledge, a driver is then able to anticipate potential problems. Often, I know when another vehicle is going to change lanes or make a turn before they actually perform the

maneuver. That's just experience."

Service to the Industry

The AMTA also presented its Service to the Industry Award to a popular and humble past-president. Henry VanSteenbergen began in the industry as a youth with his father's company, Western Alberta Produce, while he tried to decide about post-secondary studies, according to Tom Prochinsky of Trailmobile, who presented the award.

"Well, he never did pursue that university program and the Alberta trucking industry is the better for it," he said.

In the mid-1980s, VanSteenbergen and his father discussed succession, but in 1987, Lilydale Inc. made a generous offer which the younger VanSteenbergen couldn't resist, according to Prochinsky.

After the sale went through, VanSteenbergen worked for

Lilydale, but eventually bought Legal Transport, a one-truck operation that hauled eggs for Lilydale. He changed the name to Legal Freight Services and in just over 17 years, grew the company to 50 tractors and trailers.

Prochinsky noted that VanSteenbergen decided to sell a year ago, but signed a one-year contract to stay on in an advisory capacity.

"That one-year contract is up shortly and Henry will be leaving Legal Freight," he said. "Fortunately, he won't be leaving the industry. After completing his last few courses, he intends to conduct COR auditing for the WCB PIR (partners in injury reduction) program."

Dispatcher of the Year

A good dispatcher is one of the most valuable and versatile employees in the company, according

Continued on page 10 ■

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Pickups or Utility Vans.....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Propane powered vehicles.....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

4) Do you operate maintenance facilities at this location?

<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
IF YES, do you employ mechanics?.....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

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- g) Construction / Mining / Sand & Gravel
- h) Petroleum / Dry Bulk / Chemicals / Tank
- i) Manufacturing / Processing
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- k) Logging / Lumber
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TODAY!



AMTA honours tops in safety, associated trades

■ Continued from page 9

the AMTA, which crowned one of its member companies' best dispatchers at its annual convention.

"They are operations people, administrators, managers, and salespeople," said Dan Green, an account manager for Shaw Tracking, who made the award presentation.

"They are the first line of representation of your company to your customers, and of your company to your drivers. Their position is truly the cornerstone of any company and they must be able to balance profitability along with fairness and good judgment."

Green also said that a good dispatcher will promote employee loyalty, and consequently lower driver turnover.

On top of that, a good dispatcher will improve fuel mileage by ensuring the load is delivered efficiently and ultimately ensure economic and customer service success, he added.

"A great dispatcher cares about the safety and well-being of your drivers," said Green, before announcing that the AMTA had selected Debbie Begg for the award, a dispatcher with H&R Transport.

"One of the drivers had this to say about Debbie: 'She is very conscious of the elements that create the working environment: client care, safety, driver well-being, courtesy, teamwork, and problem-solving; (which) are just some of these elements. Speaking as a driver, she has never put my health or safety at risk.'"

As well as dispatch, Begg is responsible for first contact with new drivers; orientation for new drivers, not only learning to navigate throughout North America, but also the administrative maze that a new driver must address. On top of these duties, H&R Transport has praised Begg's assistance with new foreign staff, who must adjust to a new way of life, not only with work, but also with home life.



SERVICE TO THE INDUSTRY: Henry VanSteenbergen is congratulated for his long-term service to the industry by Tom Prochinsky of Trailmobile.

"Debbie has always taken the extra time to ensure these new folks are looked after," said Green. "H&R's overall success truly reflects the outcome of her continuous efforts."

Safety Person of the Year

A tragic incident long ago was a life-altering experience for Joe Woodcock, who was named the AMTA's Safety Person of the Year, at its annual conference.

"The safety bug bit Joe early in life," said Marie Hibbard, the vice-president of Bow Valley Insurance, who made the AMTA presentation. "As an 18-year-old truck driver, he was amazed at the frequency with which his fellow drivers took life-threatening chances.

"He recalls being in the shop one day, when a fellow driver – who was also a close friend – attempted to replace and refill a tire from his truck. While his friend was leaning over to focus on his task, the tire and rim blew apart, killing him instantly. That incident had a lifelong effect on Joe. From that point on, he became an advocate for safety, believing in a concept he terms 'safety compliance through education.'"

Woodcock's interest in safety

was also instilled by experiences working with the Calgary Police, where he served for 18 years, 10 of those as a traffic collision investigator and six years with the commercial vehicle unit, according to Hibbard. The past eight years have been with DECC Safety Services, as a safety consultant, advisor in transportation, instructor in air brakes, vehicle inspector, safety program developer and commercial vehicle driver evaluator, she added.

Woodcock's own corporate philosophy for safety, is that he believes that when everyone: drivers, support workers, dispatchers, supervisors and senior managers; become educated about safety, share common safety goals related to accountability and common sense, compliance happens, said Hibbard.

"The challenge is to get everyone on the same page. Joe points out that safety goals cannot be achieved by one audit alone."

Woodcock has expressed concern to the AMTA about new issues faced by the trucking industry, such as highway infrastructure problems, overcrowded roads, and driver impatience and distractions – such as cell phone use. "Joe believes these are concerns for all of

us who use the roadways and it is up to all of us to solve the problem," said Hibbard.

Associated Trades Award

Finally, the AMTA presented the Associated Trades Award to Al Sibilo of Milestone Insurance.

The AMTA paid tribute to a career that goes back to the mid-1980s when Sibilo first joined Zurich Insurance as an underwriting trainee, while he was attending the University of Alberta.

"It didn't take Al long to realize he had a passion for the insurance industry, and before he knew it, Zurich had promoted him to supervisor – and then account manager," said Greg Sokil of Sokil Express Lines. "Throughout his insurance career, Al's specialty has been commercial automobile insurance, particularly trucking fleets."

From Zurich Canada, Sibilo moved on to Markel Insurance in 1995, as western regional manager based in Alberta, which was the beginning of his extensive involvement with the AMTA, according to Sokil.

"In fact, he became a member of the conference committee, and has served on many (committees) over the years. He has also served on the member services committee and the AMTA Education Foundation."

In 2005, Sokil started Milestone Risk Management & Insurance Services, and then joined with McLean & Shaw Insurance last year, with the intention of continuing to serve the trucking industry – only from a different angle, said Sokil.

The award was appreciated by Sibilo, but he feels it may have been somewhat premature, as far as his past involvement with the AMTA and his future plans. "I do think this is a job that I am just getting started in," said Sibilo, who has no hesitation in committing himself to future AMTA projects. "I think I will work with the AMTA for another 20 years." □

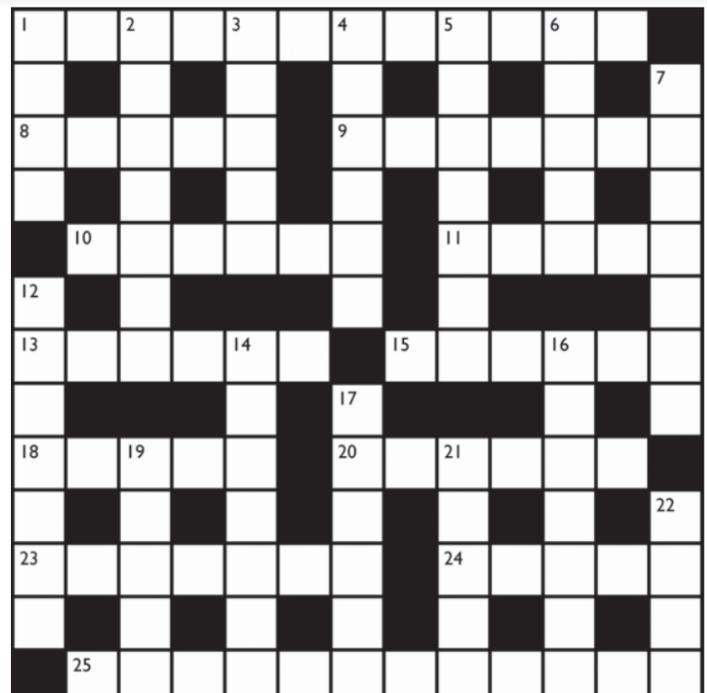
THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

1. Unmarked police cars (5,8)
8. Circular-rubber sealing device (1,4)
9. Interstate-patrolling state cop
10. "Dukes of Hazzard" tow-truck driver
11. Ohio city called The Rubber
13. See "The Last Frontier" plates here
15. Trip with frequent stops, ____ run
18. Adjusted the headlights
20. Truck-tire type
23. City known as Windy
24. "Nothing runs like a ____," ad slogan
25. Truck-stop dessert offerings
26. Word on Manitoba plates

Down

1. Seasonal truck equipment in the Snowbelt
2. Home of "Grand Canyon State" plates
3. Dark time
4. Disc-brake-system components
5. Backyard BBQ fuel
6. A bunk-heater brand
7. Dodge- and Freightliner-branded cargo van
12. Kojak with a Kodak, in other words (5,3)
14. Medium-duty Chevrolet model
16. One-way-out street (4,3)
17. Truck line headquartered in Moncton
19. State with "Vacationland" plates
21. Brand on '70s Bighorn conventional
22. The V in truck-for-sale ad's VGC



Answers on page 29

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Are health restrictions stringent enough?

Tragic accident raises questions about driver medicals

■ Continued from page 1

medical report is required when applying for or renewing a Class 1, 2 or 4 commercial vehicle licence, according to the ministry's Web site. The presence of a related medical condition does not necessarily mean that a person's ability to drive will be restricted.

Alberta Transportation will issue Class 1 commercial licences to drivers with medical conditions such as heart disease, insulin-dependent diabetes and epilepsy, under certain conditions, according to a spokesman for Alberta Transportation.

"If you've got a commercial licence you also have to have a medical fitness certificate," said Jerry Bellikka, who recently spoke to the *Edmonton Journal* on the topic. "It's a report from your doctor that says you're medically fit to drive. There is a higher degree of risk involved when driving bigger trucks with cargo. The onus is on the driver, under the law, to report any medical conditions such as a hypoglycemic incident or epileptic seizure.

"If you are a Class 1 driver and you're under the age of 45, you need to have a medical exam every five years," Bellikka said. "If you have a diabetic condition, you are required to have a medical exam and a medical form every year. That form has to document any episodes you've had in the last 12 months and be signed by the doctor."

Are medicals stringent enough?

Despite these requirements, some members of the Alberta trucking industry are still concerned about the medical standards for commercial truck drivers – especially the doctor's physical exam. Gene Orlick, the president of the Alberta Motor Transport Association and a fleet operator, recently spoke to a 60-year-old driver about a medical required to update a Class 1 licence.

"He said the doctor did not even take his blood pressure," said Orlick. "They're just signing these documents, taking the \$95 and (saying): 'Have a nice day.' There's a lot of that going on. I think that is where the problem may lie."

As a fleet operator, Orlick is concerned that the person he hires to drive, has a valid class 1 licence, a valid driver's abstract, and that he has disclosed medical conditions such as a requirement for glasses. Those medical requirements must be listed on that licence, as well as proof that there was a recent medical exam.

"So we trust the medical community, that when this guy gets his renewal, that he's actually healthy," he said.

Another member of the Alberta trucking industry has similar concerns. Ric Bolton trains commercial drivers at a driving school in Alberta, and has also driven commercial trucks for 32 years.

He says the medical standard is basically up to the discretion of the physician, who may, or may not, do a thorough exam.

"They do a basic, very basic medical for vision, urine analysis, (but) not blood tests," he said.

Furthermore, a commercial driver pays anywhere from between \$80 to \$150 for the medical exam in Alberta, a procedure that Bolton, a part-time commercial driver, must undertake every two years, now that he is an older driver.

"Some of those medicals were: 'How do you feel?'" he explained, of the interview portion of the exam, which he doesn't consider as thorough as one might expect. "That was the extent of it."

"Is that enough? I don't know. It hasn't changed in some time," he added.

Despite the preliminary toxicology report, Santos' father Julio told the *Edmonton Journal* that he still believes the tragic crash was caused by his son's diabetes, and he described a hypoglycemic

glycemia is adequate; 6) no other disqualifying complications; 7) (candidate) observes the guidelines for driving recommended by the Canadian Diabetes Association dated June 1991; and 8) (an) annual medical review including a complete eye examination including a dilated retinal examination in the presence of retinopathy, an examination by an ophthalmologist is required."

So how was Santos driving a commercial truck, if the medical requirements indicate that he was unlikely qualified, if everything his family, friends and co-workers, say about his Type 1 diabetic condition, is true?

A senior communications officer for the Alberta government indicates that physicians are required to examine individuals for each of the medical conditions outlined on the medical examination for motor vehicle operator's form, using criteria set out in the CCMTA medical standards for drivers, as a guideline.

'I wonder how many people have eye disease, epilepsy or heart trouble and won't get checked for fear of losing their licence to drive?'

Gene Orlick, Gene Orlick Transport

episode the younger Santos had experienced a few years earlier.

"We thought he had some kind of brain hemorrhage, so we (the ambulance attendants and Julio) started to drive him to the hospital in Grande Prairie," he recalled.

The Alberta Ministry of Transportation gets its medical standards from the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators' (CCMTA's) criteria developed by each of the provincial transportation ministries, which are potentially used to establish whether drivers are medically fit to drive a commercial vehicle. One of the main points in the list of the CCMTA medical standards is related to hypoglycemia, a medical condition which does not qualify for any type of motor vehicle licence, unless "treated, and the cause eliminated."

As for injectable insulin-treated diabetes, candidates are eligible for a Class 5 licence if there are no other disqualifying complications and they are not subject to hypoglycemia.

According to the CCMTA, the candidate "may be considered for Class 1, 2, 3 or 4 (licences) only if the following conditions are met: 1) no hypoglycemic episode requiring the need for intervention within the past two years; 2) no evidence of hypoglycemia unawareness; 3) the diabetes is well-controlled; 4) self-monitoring is adequate (a verifiable glycaemic log is maintained); 5) knowledge of the disease and the causes, symptoms and treatment of hypo-

which may be expected to interfere with the safe operation of a motor vehicle, full disclosure is a requirement by all parties. Yet, the physician is not subject to any liability regarding the medical exam, according to Alberta Transportation.

"Physicians are not legally obligated to report," said Olga Tvares, the director of Alberta driver fitness and monitoring. "However, should they: no liability will be accrued as stipulated in the Alberta Traffic Safety Act."

Are drivers withholding information?

Therefore, if the individual is not forthcoming about a disability, and the physician did not show due diligence with the medical exam, the Alberta government is also excluded from liability, according to Tvares. "Government is excluded and the individual would be responsible."

As for the College of Physicians of Alberta, the organization doesn't dictate how a physician should run an office, or examine a patient. The organization will get involved if there is an issue of concern.

"Our complaints department certainly would be interested," said the manager of communications for the college, Kelly Eby.

The president of the AMTA is not satisfied with this medical protocol, and wonders how many drivers are hesitant to disclose their disease, especially if the exam is not completely thorough.

"I wonder how many people have eye disease, epilepsy or heart trouble for example and won't get checked for fear of losing their licence to drive?" questioned Orlick. "I actually found one of my drivers to have diabetes and we discussed it, and because his doctor didn't say anything about the diabetes and driving, he didn't talk about it either, to protect his career. This reality is scary: my guy is on pills and from what I know he should be a lesser risk. But how do I really know if the doctors don't become involved, and more importantly become responsible for their reports?"

As far as the diabetic driver from Edmonton, Orlick can only wonder what the cause is, like many other observers.

"I feel for the family. Everyone needs reasons for closure. They can only speculate, just like us now," he said.

From 2002 to 2006, a driver's medical condition was involved in one in 200 fatal accidents and one in 180 injury accidents in Alberta, according to Alberta Transportation.

The CCMTA indicates that it doesn't collect that type of information nation-wide.

"That type of statistic would have to be generated by each province individually, and even then, I don't know if they could all do it," says Audrey Henderson, the director of programs for the CCMTA. "So, the simple answer is: I don't have that number for Canada or any of the other provinces." □

Welcome to construction season

By Scott Creighton

The ice and snow are melting away after one of the worst winters on record, but truck drivers understand the threat of the other Canadian season that is now upon us. It's called construction season.

Overnight, construction zones can emerge as quickly as any storm front ever could.

Within a few kilometres of the first warning sign, well-travelled lanes can disappear behind walls of jersey barriers, flag people and construction equipment.

All the traffic will slow down to a crawl, and any hope of a Just-in-Time delivery will evaporate like the steam that rises from a freshly applied layer of asphalt.

It can be a frustrating – and dangerous – situation.

According to research conducted by the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI), work zones represent a particular risk to commercial vehicles. Trucks may account for just over 10% of the traffic on the highway, but they also account for one-quarter of fatal construction zone incidents.

And while commercial vehicles usually account for 17% of the collisions that involve at least two vehicles, they are involved in 31% of such collisions that occur in

work zones.

These numbers indicate only part of the problem. After all, the statistics may not reflect many of the collisions that happen outside an officially-marked work area, even if the appearance of a construction zone was responsible for a sudden change in vehicle speeds.

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised about the overall risk. As the lanes begin to disappear, some motorists refuse to merge with other traffic until the last possible minute.

Despite the visible markings that exist, they appear determined to squeeze into any space that remains. (Assuming they are paying attention in the first place). And the most common form of collision involves one vehicle sideswiping another.

The challenges will be particularly apparent to those who haul oversized loads and have trouble fitting within a standard 12-foot lane. In a construction zone, an active lane might be as little as 10 feet wide, and that will force oversized vehicles to cross the all-important center line throughout the work area.

The best defensive tool for any truck driver will come in the form of information that warns about pending construction work. This can require dispatchers to keep in touch with government hotlines that an-

nounce the timing of the projects, and distribute any related information over satellite units as soon as possible. But, sometimes, we need to recognize that this might not be enough. News of last-minute road repairs may need to come from local radio reports and be shared by truckers over the cell phone or CB.

Everybody plays a role in giving fellow truckers a chance to alter routes, inform customers about potential delays, or avoid the last-minute steering corrections that can cause a rollover.

In terms of actions at the wheel, drivers need to embrace all of their well-honed defensive driving techniques. Indeed, the appearance of a work zone's warning sign indicates that it is time to gear down and be prepared to stop. Narrowing and disappearing lanes will also require drivers to leave a little extra space between their bumper and the vehicle in front of them.

Since a significant number of work zone collisions involve rear-end crashes, it is particularly important for drivers to keep a close eye on the reflections in their West Coast mirrors, while maintaining the all-important escape route in case another motorist begins to squeeze into their lane.

Ignoring such defensive driving

practices will come at a cost – both in the form of potential collisions and steeper penalties. If workers are on the job in an Ontario construction zone, for example, an extra 30 km/h of speed could be met with a \$420 fine and four demerit points. By ignoring the signals from a flag person, a driver could face a \$500 fine and three points.

We all need to accept that the challenges of construction zones are hardly about to end anytime soon. North America's infrastructure will continue to crumble, and that means last-minute repairs will continue to be a reality.

We may not be able to predict the amount of snow that will fall next winter, but we can be certain that the challenges of construction season will be with us from one year to the next. □

@ARTICLECATEGORY:3361;

– This month's expert is Scott Creighton, advisor in the safety and training services department. Scott has more than 20 years of experience as a driver and a safety supervisor including 18 years working for an over-dimensional carrier. Send your questions, feedback and comments about this column to info@markel.ca. Markel Safety and Training Services, a division of Markel Insurance Company of Canada, offers specialized courses, seminars and consulting to fleet owners, safety managers, trainers and drivers.

TAX TALK

An accountant's guide to cutting fuel costs

Slow down. Don't over-rev the engine. Cut your idling time. There's no shortage of advice from fleet managers, driver-trainers, or even your own gut about how to control the cost of fuel.

But what does your accountant have to say?

I don't drive a truck for a living. But I do see good ideas and decisions reflected in the balance sheets of owner/operators and small fleet managers who are finding ways to reduce the impact of volatile fuel prices on their business.

Talk to your accountant about fuel-saving strategies off the road. Here are four questions to ask:

What percentage of my operating cost is diesel fuel?

Fuel traditionally represents 15% to 30% of a carrier's operating cost. A recent report from the Ontario Trucking Association says that figure is closer to 45% today. At many carriers in Canada and the US, the cost of fuel outstrips the cost of labour.

Because fuel is rising at a greater rate than other operating expenses (the price of diesel has jumped 250% over the last five years), it makes sense to monitor fuel as a percentage of your overall operating cost.

If you receive a fuel surcharge, or are setting rates, it gives you a more precise idea of whether what you're charging is enough to recoup your cost.

Tax Talk

Scott Taylor



Should taxes affect where I buy my fuel?

When you buy diesel, various taxes are buried in the price. The US and Canada both levy a federal fuel tax; in Canada, you pay GST or HST as well.

Then there are state and provincial taxes which vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

You don't really know how much fuel costs unless you take all the taxes out. If you're an owner/operator leased to a carrier that's responsible for fuel tax and reporting for your vehicle, your only concern is finding the lower pump price. But if the carrier charges you when you owe fuel taxes or pays you when you're due a refund, you may be able to reduce costs by purchasing fuel in jurisdictions with the best net price (we post an up-to-date fuel-price comparison chart at www.tfsgroup.com/tfs/wheretobuy-fuel.html).

Is my draw a fixed cost or a variable one?

With fuel through the roof, insurance premiums continuing to increase, and normal inflation, one of the few expenses that is probably

not heading upward is your salary.

If you're an incorporated owner/operator, your labour costs are the total of the T4 wage expense and dividends you pay to yourself. If you're a sole proprietor, your labour cost is your net profit – the number at the bottom of your P&L that you just paid tax on.

I know a lot of business owners wrestle with whether to take home less in order to pay for unanticipated costs. Faced with raising prices, cutting employees, or simply eating the cost themselves, they choose the latter. Maybe that's a reality of being self-employed.

Or perhaps, if you commit to paying yourself \$60,000 a year, you draw that \$5,000 a month no matter what. In addition to paying household expenses, you continue investing a portion of that income so each contribution compounds and strengthens your personal savings. And you find other ways to save on the business.

What does my contract say about fuel surcharges?

Among owner/operators and the carriers they're leased to, the debate over fuel surcharges has moved beyond how they are calculated to how they are treated on broker settlement statements.

Some carriers show fuel surcharges on their broker statements with the revenue, others show it as a reimbursement. A surcharge is an additional, variable cost that's added to the basic rate for the service. It's separate from the rate, fluctuates

with the price of fuel, and in theory will go away once fuel prices decline.

In my opinion, it's not income. Reporting it as such creates additional, unwarranted expenses for the owner/operator. For example, the carrier may charge its owner/operators for insurance based on their gross income. Factoring a surcharge into this figure would inflate the insurance fee and unfairly reduce the fuel surcharge's affect of compensating for higher fuel costs.

Fair or not, some carriers will do whatever they want. It's hard to pin them down to broker agreements that they themselves wrote and generally are able to change at any time.

When it comes to comparing carriers to work with, you can't only look at one number but must consider the whole pay package. If your carrier isn't treating you fairly with fuel surcharges, perhaps it's time for a change. There is no point in staying loyal to someone that's not loyal to you.

Don't believe the old trucker's tale that all carriers are the same. But don't get fooled by one part of a pay package, either. Review all the charges and paid-for items to determine how much you'd make at another carrier versus where you are now. Your accountant should be able to help you with this. □

– Scott Taylor is vice-president of TFS Group, a Waterloo, Ont., company that provides accounting, fuel tax reporting, and other business services for truck fleets and owner/operators. For information, visit www.tfsgroup.com or call 800-461-5970.

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Perfect storm hit harder, faster than anyone expected

The mess we're in today didn't happen overnight. Some of the complicating factors occurred surprisingly quickly and took a lot of us by surprise, but the signs were there. The difficulty, as always, comes in making the necessary adjustments. As I talk with the folks on the road, it's difficult to ignore the anguish and total frustration in their voices.

Yet, the suffering isn't universal. Some are doing surprisingly well today - carriers and owner/operators alike. Maybe they saw it coming and took steps sooner, or reacted differently. Who knows? Whatever made the difference will give rise to some interesting analysis when all this is over, but I'd bet those who weather the storm best will be the smart operators who value business relationships and understand that you just can't truck for nothing.

For the benefit of those still wondering what happened to trucking over the past 18 months, here's how experts explain it.

Canadians got creamed when the US dollar imploded last spring. The exchange rate evaporated in the space of about six months, taking with it the premium we enjoyed on freight rates. The Yanks stopped buying Canadian goods just as our appetite for American stuff boomed. Southbound loads were moving at fire sale prices, and because of the cost of deadheading south to get freight destined for Canada, we found ourselves at a competitive disadvantage in the northbound lanes.

Two years earlier, truck makers had begun ramping up production in response to the 07 pre-buy demand. While demand for trucking service was dropping, roughly 100,000 more new trucks than usual hit the street between 2005 and 2006. This caused a glut in capacity that penny-pinching shippers were eager to take advantage of.

It was not a pretty picture: banks were tightening up on credit, the US was heading into a recession, and with US freight volumes down, American truckers were grabbing what had traditionally been our freight.

And then the price of fuel went through the roof.

Fuel prices had been climbing steadily since 9/11, but the increases have been more or less manageable until recently. You can deal with steady, slow increases by adjusting rates and surcharges as you go, but with the spikes we've experienced since the beginning of 2008, we've simply been unable to adjust.

I heard some scary numbers last month at Truck World in Toronto from Steve Russell, chair and CEO of Celadon, the Indianapolis-based truckload carrier with terminals and operations in Mexico and Canada. In his "State of the Industry" speech he pointed out that fuel costs on 120,000 miles a year have increased by \$56,000 since 9/11. That's fifty-six-thousand dollars more than it cost to run 120,000 miles in 2001.

Are you making \$56,000 more than you did in 2001/2002?

Celadon's fuel surcharge was 59



Voice of the O/O
Joanne Ritchie
cents/mile in April when fuel was at \$4.05/gallon (\$1.07/litre). That was on top of what he says was the company's average rate of \$1.55/mile. But in the last three months of last year, Russell says the average rate paid by a Celadon customer went down by a nickel a mile to \$1.50. That may not sound like much, but it cost his company \$3 million in the fourth quarter of 2007.

Yet despite skyrocketing fuel costs, I hear every day about one carrier or another actually cutting fuel surcharges. Unbelievable. They're cutting mileage rates, too,

and some are even trying to shorten the distance between two points on the map. But when I state the obvious - don't take the cut if you can't afford it - some owner/ops argue it's unreasonable to expect 50- to 60-cent surcharges from carriers and customers. Only you can make that call because you know your costs, but if the big outfits are charging and getting 59 cents, why aren't you?

In his Truck World speech, Russell also noted that historically, about 100 small fleets in the US fail in a typical quarter. Compare that with the first three months of this year when 400 fleets went belly-up. He watches stuff like that.

Watching the signs is part of knowing your market, one of the seven habits of successful owner/operators - or any business operator for that matter.

And speaking of watching the signs, lest you become one of the statistics Russell cites in his next speech, keep a sharp eye open for clues that your business partners might be experiencing difficulties. If cheques are withheld or don't clear the bank, or if you're seeing unexplained deductions, there's probably a cash flow problem.

If your fuel cards are capped or limited, be wary. You wouldn't want to be halfway across the country when the fuel company - or worse, the insurance company - pulls the plug. Know the big picture. But, say the pundits, don't expect the view to change anytime soon. □

- Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. What's your view? E-mail her at jritchie@obac.ca or call toll-free 888-794-9990.



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Why drivers leave

"Retention is not a program – it's a culture."

By Jan Westell

BANFF, Alta. – Despite the current slowdown, the trucking industry remains plagued with a driver shortage, a situation that is not expected to improve any time soon according to a speaker at the Alberta Motor Transport Association's annual convention.

"Employee retention is the number one challenge," said Rael Kalley, a consultant with Strategic Pathways.

Part of Strategic Pathway's method of solving the problem is to analyze employment surveys and learn why employees are resigning.

Kalley noted that driver turnover is the single greatest cost

to the trucking industry, and estimates that it may cost a fleet operator as much as \$12,500 per employee.

"Many companies do not realize the true cost of replacing one employee," said the human resources consultant, who added that in many cases it's a "needless expense."

Strategic Pathways takes advantage of various employment surveys to ascertain the reasons why people resign.

The research team has discovered that the decision to jump ship is rarely about financial need, which is often considered to be the main reason.

"It's an absolute myth," he said.

"It just isn't so."

Another myth is about loyalty. Workplace abuse was the primary reason for leaving – not a lack of loyalty, according to Kalley's research. "It has to be earned and maintained," he said.

The HR consultant stated that employee values have changed from decades ago, when frequent career changes were frowned upon.

Today, greater employee movement is now considered to be "growth-oriented," rather than an indication of an unstable career path.

Strategic Pathways conducts hundreds of interviews every month, and Kalley's research team analyzed 10 recent interviews that were done just before the Banff seminar to document the reasons that survey subjects were giving for their recent resignations.

"We have what we call 'depar-

ture diagnosis,'" said Kalley. "We find why, and what caused people to leave."

Of those 10, four people stated that the primary reason was "poor treatment by supervisors, or someone in management." Many of these complaints listed abuse, such as: bullying, being yelled at, sworn at, discounted, or insulted, said the HR specialist.

"How can we afford to lose people, simply by the way we talk to them?" he asked.

Two of the people that were analyzed for this small survey indicated their reason for quitting was due to a lack of appreciation. The last two expressed that they were "burned out" due to staff shortages as well as excess overtime – again, without appreciation.

"All they ask for in return is for somebody to say 'Thank you,'" said Kalley, who noted that these former employees weren't opposed to hard work, but felt that they were not being recognized for their extra efforts.

Of the remaining two of the 10 interview subjects: one person resigned to start a business, and another resigned because of a spouse that was moving to another city.

Consequently, out of this small analysis, and countless others, Kalley believes the main reason for leaving a company is related to the culture of the company.

"People don't leave companies," said Kalley. "They leave relationships."

The HR specialist also spoke about another indicator that leads to dissatisfaction in the workplace: feedback, or lack thereof.

"People want feedback about how they are doing," he said. "People tell us, day after day after day: 'There is no feedback.' They didn't know if they are doing well or doing poorly."

Further, employment analysis researched by Strategic Pathways indicates that dissatisfied employees complained that approval is rarely shown if the business is running smoothly.

But once something goes wrong, supervisors are quick to lay blame. Often, such a transgression is addressed by a management inquiry, according to Kalley. This reaction is what he refers to as "seagull management," which "flies in," reprimands staff, "then flies away."

Kalley encouraged the fleet operators to consider those who may be responsible when an employee resigns, and to consider who might be responsible for a poor working relationship.

"When somebody leaves a company, people whom they report to bear some responsibility for that," he said.

The consultant indicated that employment referrals strengthen the employment pool, but a lack of word-of-mouth approval may be an indication that human resources may be the company's downfall – another costly problem, according to Kalley, that detracts from retention. "Retention is not a program," he said. "It's a culture." □

SAME ROADS – NEW CHALLENGES

October 1 & 2, 2008

Westin Bristol Place Hotel, 950 Dixon Rd., Toronto, ON

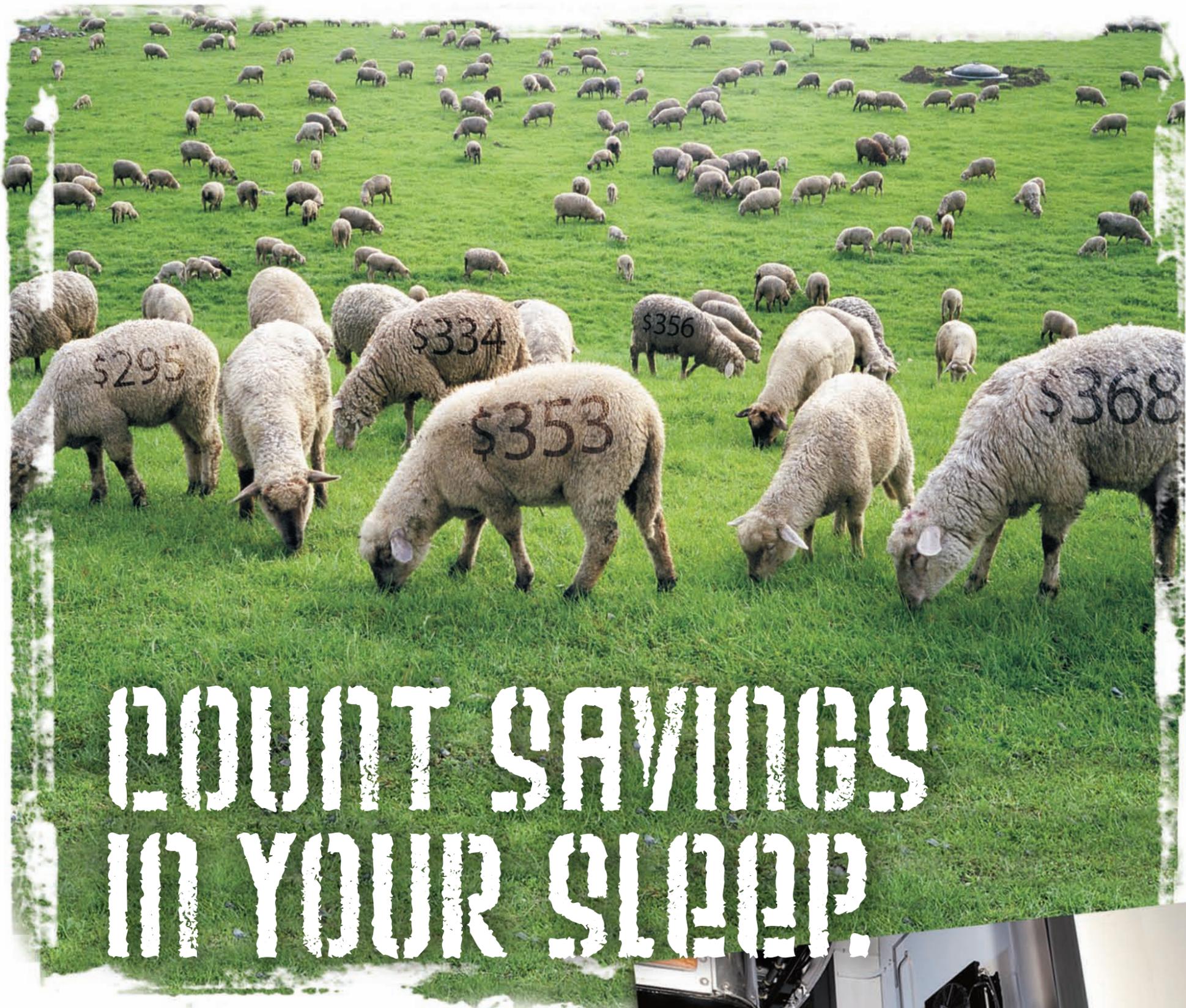
Event:	Hosted by Natural Resources Canada's ecoENERGY for Fleets (FleetSmart) and the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) SmartWay Transport Partnership.
Purpose:	Same Roads – New Challenges - This forum will provide an opportunity for transportation industry professionals to explore and discover practical solutions to today's challenge to go GREEN ; managing the issue of energy efficiency in today's on-road fleets.
The Forum Program:	Focusing on the Return on Investment; developing education, training, and technologies for success in a GREEN world. Day 1: Focus will be on calculating the return on investment in corporate operations, driver training and technologies. Day 2: Focus will be on building a GREEN plan, overcoming barriers, and managing, measuring and encouraging success. Industry experts will share their stories and show delegates how to do their own calculations.
Target Audience:	This forum is critical to Fleet Executives and Managers, Supervisors, Driver Trainers, Labour Representatives, Training Schools, Carriers and Shippers, Government Officials and consultants serving the on-road transportation industry. This is a fantastic opportunity for the trucking, bus, transit, municipal, utility and urban fleet employees to network.
Where:	Westin Bristol Place Hotel, 950 Dixon Rd., Toronto, Ontario, M9W 5N4 Tel: (416) 675-9444 or 1-800-837-5184 Room Rates: \$155.00 Reference: FleetSmart Forum
When:	September 30, 2008 (Registration only) October 1 & 2, 2008.
Registration:	Delegate fees (All prices quoted are Cdn. + GST): Early bird special \$525.00 per person for registrations prior to August 29th All sessions thereafter \$595.00 Single day purchases are also available at \$325.00 Details and registration forms are available by contacting Leah Quelch: Email: leah.quelch@antian.ca Phone: 613-233-6464 Toll free: 1-888-758-1122 Web: Antian.ca
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CSI Trucking: RCMP investigator gives tips on crime prevention

By Jan Westell

BANFF, Alta. – A security specialist with the RCMP is promoting a national crime awareness program, not unlike neighbourhood watch, but designed specifically for the trucking industry.

Sgt. Rob Ruiters is a coordinator for the national Pipeline/Convoy/Jetway program, a crime awareness and inspection program.

He travels the country, training other law enforcement personnel as well as the trucking industry, to become more educated about suspicious criminal activity – and to report it.

“There’s a problem with criminality in the transportation system,” he said at the Alberta Motor Transport Association’s recent convention. “That’s just a reality.”

By raising awareness, and by educating the trucking industry, Ruiters indicated that this type of crime watch could support the efforts of chronically under-staffed law enforcement agencies. Many police officers don’t have the time to effectively patrol commercial motor vehicles, he said, since violent crimes will always be a priority.

“If I can tell you any message, it’s this: If you’re waiting for us to help you, you’ll be waiting a long time. We can only help so much. We’re not saying we’re not interested. We’re not saying we’re not going to be there. The reality is, we’re all faced with challenges. We’ll do the best we can. The best people to help the problems you’re having

within the transportation industry, are you folks – through best practices and starting to develop certain formats.”

In his entertaining and informative presentation, Ruiters described the problems facing law enforcement agencies when investigating suspicious activity along Canada’s highways. One problem, apart from lack of manpower, is the reluctance of police to inspect commercial vehicles and effectively interrogate the driver, despite a growing problem related to transporting contraband.

“No matter how any kind of criminality gets into in this country, at one time or another, it ends up in a motor vehicle,” he said.

The Pipeline/Convoy program began in the US in the 1980s, when cocaine shipments were arriving in Florida and subsequently shipped north to New York and Chicago by truck, according to Ruiters. Traffic police at that time began to notice commonalities with suspicious-looking trucks and related seizures. Consequently, operation Convoy (motor vehicles)/Pipeline (commercial motor vehicles) was developed, with great success.

“They starting coming across trucks that were moving a lot of stuff that they shouldn’t be moving,” he said. “They found that big dope comes in big trucks.”

Ruiters started a similar Canadian program in the early 1990s, and one of his first initiatives was to promote greater inspections

at the US/Canada border crossing, but he still isn’t impressed with the results.

“Customs said they were going to increase the amount of trucks checked at the border to 2%. I think they’re still working on it,” he said.

One of the mandates of the program is to promote greater awareness among police officers and to increase their investigational, conversational and awareness skills. Although many Canadian police officers are already seasoned about regular inspections with the motoring public, according to Ruiters, they still need to become more aware about suspicious criminal activity. “We know what the norms are. So what are we looking for? The anomalies.”

Ruiters told AMTA delegates how to spot suspicious activity that should be apparent to anybody who works in the trucking industry, and he gave a few specific examples. One incident was related to a driver of a truck who was stopped in Manitoba, near Winnipeg. Apparently, there were a number of suspicious indicators, such as: there were no mandatory markings on the exterior of the truck; there was an overwhelming odour of air freshener; and the cab curtain was closed, yet the driver was on his own. These were all clues that lead to an easy seizure after a simple inspection.

“There were several hockey bags sitting in the sleeper,” said Ruiters. “The last time I checked, most truck drivers by themselves, don’t have five hockey bags for luggage.”

Another example of a suspicious situation which should be apparent to anybody within the trucking industry was a lone tractor recently found bobtailing from West Vancouver to Toronto. The bobtail was eventually spotted by a police officer a few hours from any community, who wisely investigated.

“It was an unusual sight, which would not be considered cost-effective,” said Ruiters. “How do you

make a buck out of that?”

He said the officer was also suspicious because such a long drive without a trailer would be quite uncomfortable.

“They’re not designed to be driven that way,” he added.

Other anomalies that tipped the officer in this case, were: the absence of a log book; the driver didn’t have a licence; and a small amount of marijuana was found in the cab, before more drugs were found in a roof compartment.

The security officer also warned about questionable trucking companies that undercut legitimate trucking organizations for the purpose of transporting contraband amongst a legal load.

“They can augment that load with their own load and they move it within the legitimate load,” he said. “They’ll hide it, so the product that’s being shipped is being compromised as well.”

Not only should fleet operators become more aware about criminal transportation activity, Ruiters recommended that fleet operators train all operational personnel to become educated and more aware about the same issue. These employees may easily detect unusual behaviour with drivers, structural changes to trucks, and other suspicious activity around the yard.

Employee drug use is another issue the trucking industry should be wary of, according to Ruiters. Law enforcement agencies have stopped many truck drivers who consider small amounts of marijuana harmless. That’s not necessarily the case, according to Ruiters, who advised the Alberta trucking industry to be aware of this safety issue.

“Some of them are driving your vehicles. That should be a real concern to you. You’ve got to wonder about the people driving in your trucks, working in your company, your warehouses. It’s definitely a safety concern,” he concluded. □

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Ancra Canada expands sales force

WINNIPEG, Man. – Ancra Canada has paired up with a new marketing team to expand its push into Canada.

Winnipeg-based Pro Force Marketing began representing Ancra's cargo control product line beginning May 1, the company announced.

Pro Force has nine years experience in the heavy-duty transportation industry. It will offer a team of six salespeople, the companies have announced.

The sales team will represent Ancra's cargo control products at the OEM, aftermarket and fleet levels, according to company officials.

They will work alongside Brian Larocque, Canadian sales manager and Richard Drapeau, eastern region sales manager.

"Today's transportation industry is looking for both safety and uniqueness from their cargo control suppliers. Ancra's innovative ideas in the area of cargo management and tie-down, positions Ancra to becoming a prominent supplier of cargo control product in Canada. We, Pro Force Marketing, are glad to have been given the opportunity to be part of Ancra's sales team," announced Chuck Fritsch, Canadian sales manager with Pro Force Marketing. □

Suppliers raise prices to offset surging raw materials costs

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – Components produced by Marmon Highway Technologies will receive a price adjustment to compensate for an unprecedented rise in materials costs, the company has announced.

Marmon, under various brands such as Fontaine, Leland and Fleetline, manufactures everything from fifth wheels to brake systems to clutches and transport trailers. Marmon president Kelly Dier said the company has done everything possible to reduce production costs and thus far has been able to compensate for the increased costs of raw materials. Now, however, the only option remaining is to increase prices, he said.

Nearly every product produced by Marmon's companies consist of metals as the primary raw material. Prices for scrap metal alone have surged 88% in the first quarter, the company pointed out in a release.

"These immediate actions are essential to allow us to continue our long history of providing innovative products and unsurpassed service," Dier said. "As the technology leader in our product categories, we are absolutely committed to research and development that will continue to reduce weight, improve product performance and deliver market-leading value to

meet the needs of our customers."

Meanwhile, Webb Wheel also announced it will adjust prices to compensate for surging raw materials costs.

Webb announced that it will immediately implement a monthly pricing schedule through all its product lines, which will reflect current raw materials prices.

"Castings are a significant part of our total product costs," explained Pedro Ferro, Webb Wheel Products president. "Webb has been working closely with our casting suppliers to monitor the scrap market trends. In the first quarter of 2008, scrap prices have increased 88%, and we have experienced further alarming increases since the first of April. It's unfortunate, but we have no reason to believe the extreme scrap market volatility will subside any time soon, thus making the immediate pricing changes necessary."

The increased cost of raw materials is blamed on increased demand for scrap metals around the world. A weak US dollar and weak supply is contributing to the problem. Webb officials said the company will try as much as possible to mitigate the impact rising materials costs are having on customers, but conceded that raising prices is inevitable. □

Mack introduces CARB-approved engine options

LEHIGH VALLEY, Pa. – Mack's MP7 and MP8 engines are now available in a CARB-friendly configuration which can be idled beyond five minutes in California.

Customers can now spec' an "Idle Emission Certification – CARB 08" version of both engines built after Jan. 1, 2008, the company says. California's stringent anti-idling rules, introduced earlier this year, do not allow non-compliant engines to idle longer than five minutes.

In order to be exempt from the no-idle rule, an engine must emit less than 30 grams of NOx per hour. Mack officials says both the MP7 and MP8 are now capable of this. Mack says it is already taking orders on the new option.

A decal must be affixed to the hood of trucks with a CARB-approved engine.

"This feature gives Mack drivers the ability to idle their engines as needed, while still emitting extremely low levels of NOx," said David McKenna, Mack powertrain sales and marketing manager. "Our customers know not to idle unnecessarily, but they will be pleased with having this option for those times when idling is necessary. And Mack MP engines are designed to be very fuel efficient while idling." □



Chevron Commercial Cardlock

Maxim consolidates business units

WINNIPEG, Man. – The owners of Maxim Transportation Services have consolidated the company’s seven divisions and 15 branch offices under a new name: Maxim Truck & Trailer.

“The new unified name and brand – Maxim Truck & Trailer – represents our strategy to place a greater focus on the overall customer experience at all Maxim divisions and branches,” says president Doug Harvey. “We are placing an even greater emphasis on making things simple for our customers by offering end-to-end solutions for all their truck and trailer needs.”

Maxim Truck & Trailer is a full-service truck and trailer dealership with capabilities including: sales; rental; leasing; and after-sales service of new and used trucks and trailers. It also boasts a national presence, with 15 branch offices and more than 560 employees based in 10 Canadian cities between Vancouver and Montreal.

“For over 27 years, Maxim’s growth and expansion have been driven by a focus on our customers,” says Harvey. “As we embark on a new chapter under the unified Maxim Truck & Trailer banner, meeting the needs of our customers – both large and small – will continue to guide our business.” □

Cummins reports solid growth in Q1

COLUMBUS, Ind. – Cummins has enjoyed a strong first quarter, thanks in part to increased market share in the North American trucking industry. Cummins posted Q1 sales of US\$3.47 billion (up 23% over the same period last year) and a net income of US\$190 million (up 33% over last year).

“Our strong performance in the first quarter, which came in the face of considerable economic uncertainty in the US, is further proof that our diversification and growth strategies are working,” said Cummins chairman and CEO Tim Solso. “While we are monitoring the US economy closely, we intend to continue invest-

ing in opportunities around the world to fuel further growth in the future.”

Demand for Cummins medium-duty truck engines was especially strong in the first quarter, the company reported.

Heavy-duty truck engine shipments were up 36% compared to the same time last year and medium-duty engine shipments surged 68%, thanks to increased market share in North America.

Through February, Cummins reported it enjoyed 43% market share in the North American Class 8 truck engine market, compared to just 28% the same time last year. □



BEST IN THE WEST: Bill Sie dealer principal Gold Key GMC Commercial Truck Center (left); Joe Aiello, national commercial truck sales manager, GM Canada; Martin Armstrong commercial truck sales manager GM Canada (behind); and Jim Alden (right) sales manager west, Isuzu Commercial Trucks of Canada celebrate Gold Key’s accomplishment recently in B.C.

Irvine, Gold Key repeat winners in GM sales

SURREY, B.C. – Both Irvine Truck Centre of Markham, Ont. and Gold Key’s commercial truck centre in Surrey, B.C., have once again been named the top dealerships in their respective classes. Irvine generated the highest sales of any medium-duty GM dealership in Canada for 2007, while Gold Key accomplished the same feat for W-series low cab-forward trucks.

Irvine, which beat out 74 other medium-duty dealerships to claim top spot, had the best sales numbers in 2006 as well, achieving an all-time high in that year. Irvine sales representative Russ White was also able to defend his title as top performing salesperson in the nation.

Gold Key delivered 124 units in 2007 and was a repeat winner, like Irvine. “This impressive feat is due to Gold Key’s outstanding customer service and overall business performance as well as the 110% effort and valuable work contributions that are made by over 100 committed members of the Gold Key Team,” officials said. □



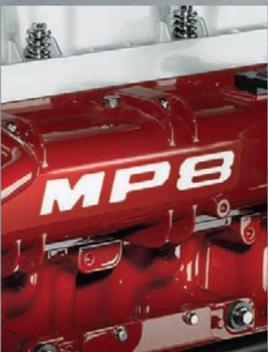
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PERFORMANCE DRIVEN

Bridgestone discusses Bandag integration

By Lou Smyrlis

NEW YORK, N.Y. – Ten months after its blockbuster purchase of the privately-held Bandag retread franchising business and a few weeks after the official merging of its truck tire and retreading operations, Bridgestone unveiled its newly named Bridgestone Bandag Tire Solutions (BBTS) business unit to dealers, distributors and press gathered here for the annual BizCon meeting. The public unveiling of the new tire powerhouse included the introduction of the new president for the business, its new home and its strategy for going to market.

Saul Solomon, who joined Bridgestone/Firestone in 1993 as general counsel rising to vice-president and general counsel of Bridgestone Americas Holding by 2000, was introduced as president of the new group. Having previously led a transition team during Bridgestone Americas' 2007 merger with Bandag, he went on to serve as chairman, CEO and president of Bridgestone Bandag, LLC beginning June 1, 2007.

BBTS will be operating out of the former headquarters of Bandag in Muscatine, Iowa, however, the sales and marketing functions will be run out of Bridgestone's Nashville headquarters and will be headed by long-time Bridgestone executive Singh Alhuwalia.

He assumes the role of president, sales and marketing for BBTS. Company officials stressed that the four company brands will retain their unique identities and continue to be marketed under their current mix of channels.

But the goal of the restructuring is to be able to provide fleets with an integrated solution that includes both new tires and retreads for all types of customers. There are four types of tire buyers, according to BBTS officials: "product buyers" who are loyal to specific products or brands; "price only buyers" who focus on cost; "life-cycle buyers," who want their tire decision to pay dividends on the bottom line over both

the short- and long-term, and the "outsourcing buyers."

The Bridgestone brand will remain the premium offering with Firestone provided as a lower-priced option and Dayton set up to provide an answer to the onslaught of low-priced offshore products. Bandag will continue with its current franchise set up. Essentially, the Bridgestone and Bandag brands will be offered in all channels. Firestone will be offered in the dealer, truck stop and government channels. Dayton will be offered in the dealer channel.

"Our go-to-market strategy will allow us the ability to compete in all these areas," said Kurt Danielson, vice-president, North American marketing

The integration has also changed the way the new company will set up its regional sales. Whereas before the integration North America was divided into four regions – Canada and the US northcentral, southeast and west, it is now divided into eight regions: Canada (directed by Jim West) and the US northeast, northcentral, Great Lakes, southeast, southcentral, southwest and northwest.

"Virtually every time we asked our dealers what we could do to deliver more value, the answer was consistently the same. We needed to

be more fleet-focused and less concerned with filling our dealers' shelves. More time with the fleets, less time with the dealers," said Art Campagnoni, vice-president, North American commercial sales for truck and bus. "We listened. We took action."

Each sales region will consist of dealer sales managers, regional fleet sales managers, and territory sales managers reporting to the regional fleet sales managers.

"This structure is flatter and more focused. It isn't focused on just achieving sales numbers. It is focused on providing bundled solutions to fleet customers that buy these products and services from you," Campagnoni told the dealers and distributors in attendance.

Solomon also acknowledged during a press briefing that company executives struggled with the decision to keep Canada as just one region.

"The geography is so big but the market size is about the same as some of our other regions. And that region is working so well now. The Bandag and the Bridgestone guys are always together. But we would consider Canada East and Canada West regions if we found there was a need," he said. □

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Price increase set for US Bandag customers

MUSCATINE, Iowa – Bridgestone Bandag Tire Solutions (BBTS) has announced price increases in the US of up to 5% for tread rubber products to its Bridgestone Bandag franchised dealers. No increase is being taken for tread rubber products in Canada. The new pricing went into effect May 5.

"Unprecedented energy prices continue to impact our costs, particularly for raw materials and transportation," said Saul Solomon, president of BBTS. "We'll continue to focus on enhancing our operational efficiencies and increase productivity so that we may only pass on increased costs as absolutely necessary. Our Bandag dealer network will continue to offer quality retread tires, as well as preventive maintenance services, to help fleet customers control their operating costs at a time when they need it most."

BBTS executives hinted at price increases during the company's recent BizCon conference in New York, stressing several times that tire manufacturers are being challenged by a combination of a slower economic market and escalating raw materials costs.

"You now have a headache that even high doses of morphine cannot cure," said Singh Alhuwalia, president, sales and marketing during a speech at the conference. "Tough choices, tough decisions but I can say this with certainty: Prices of raw materials have drastically escalated over the past 12 months. Our costs are up and we have no choice but to pass these costs on as we have no way to absorb these rapidly escalating raw material costs." □

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Detroit Diesel offers free performance upgrades

REDFORD, Mich. – Detroit Diesel has announced it will be offering a free software upgrade that will boost the fuel efficiency of its Series 60 engines. The software will enhance fuel economy by up to 2.5%, the company says.

"Extensive testing of the Series 60 has shown our particulate filter regeneration process is more effective than originally anticipated," said David Siler, director of marketing for Detroit Diesel. "The fact that the filters are staying clean, combined with some advancements in the regeneration software, allow us to enhance the regeneration process to improve the fuel efficiency for the engines."

In addition to improving the DPF regeneration cycle, the new software will also enhance the shifting and cruise control functions, the company says. It will accomplish this by limiting engine speed during up-shifts and optimizing engine speed while in cruise control. Customers can receive the performance upgrades by visiting their Detroit Diesel dealer or service location, beginning July 1. The upgrades will be automatically built into new Series 60 engines produced after July 1, 2008. □

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DANITA BIGEAGLE

3185-SR

D.O.B.: Mar 06, 1984

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Weight: 118 lbs.

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RATES

Rate wars

Are trucking companies facing Darwinian extinction?

By Ingrid Phaneuf

TORONTO, Ont. – To hear trucking industry insiders describe it, the current rate crunch is Darwinian in scale - long, drawn out and threatening to change the face of the trucking industry as we know it. And it's all thanks to rate cutting, a practice which, according to trucking industry insiders, is spreading like cancer and causing an equivalent amount of damage.

"A tremendous amount of rate cutting is happening," says Caravan Logistics general manager Kevin Snobel. "Between now and next year I'm predicting at least 10% of companies now in existence will have folded."

First comes rate cutting, and then comes extinction, warn those in the know. "It's devastating, very harmful," says Ray Haight, executive director of MacKinnon Transport and recently elected 2008-2009 chairman of the Truckload Carriers Association. "And it's a slow death. Eventually the companies who do it go out of business. I hear the survival of the fittest argument – that eventually rates will go up when

consolidation happens – but I don't think a downward pressure on rates is good for the industry at any time."

Haight says safety is just one of the sacrifices carriers make in order to run for less.

"What I worry about is that smaller carriers will find a way to survive by putting more hours on their trucks on a daily basis that they should legally. It creates all sorts of problems for everyone," says Haight, who also worries downward spiraling rates will drive truck speeds up.

"Speed limiting legislation would level the playing field of course," he says, adding the trucks in his fleet have been 105 km/h on the pedal and 102 km/h on cruise for as long as he can remember.

Snobel, meanwhile, is concerned about the long-term effects of rate cutting, namely the amount of time it will take for the industry to recover the gain it made a few years ago.

"If I'm carrying freight that's worth \$1,000 for \$850 how long will it take me to get back to the rate



DO YOU KNOW THIS GUY?: Carriers are putting themselves out of business by underbidding on freight and placing unsustainable pressure on rates.

I should be charging? With a few percentage points increase per year it'll take five to seven years just to get back to where I need to be in the first place."

Consolidation isn't the answer, says Snobel.

"When consolidation happens, service suffers.

The customer needs to understand that," he says. But who's undercutting their rates and why? While Haight says it could be just about anyone, Snobel lays the blame squarely on inexperienced players.

"The type of carrier who cuts rates could be any carrier hauling a trailer," says Haight, "except maybe the niche carriers, like temperature control and tank carriers who are insulated a bit from the overall crunch."

"So many people hang out a shingle and just don't know how to run a business," says Snobel.

"Bad business is the main culprit – just because you own two or three trucks it doesn't make you a smart

business person."

So what's the solution? Are low rates here to stay or will the industry recover, one small step at a time? And how? Charging more for backhauls coming from the States is one way cross border carriers can recover lost revenues, says Snobel.

"Rates are higher coming home now, than going out, which is the opposite of what it used to be in the past, with customers paying more for a headhaul," says Snobel, who insists the so-called capacity is overstated. "The industry is overreacting by undercutting rates unnecessarily. There's plenty of reason for cross-border rates to stay up. It still costs money to cross the border, what with ACE and PIP and all the driver training you have to do. And driver shortages and retention are still an issue. Not to mention how much money it takes to keep good drivers happy."

Parking trucks is an option that carriers should seriously consider, says Haight. "We trim back where we have to," he says. Avoiding buying new equipment is another option. Diversifying so as not to be reliant on one kind of load is still another, he adds. Not to mention keeping a close eye on expenses, says Haight.

"At the Truckload Carriers Association, we benchmark expenses so we can keep track of what fuel, repairs and maintenance cost. About 40-50 carriers' expenses are now being benchmarked. It's a cheaper, better way to share knowledge and increase productivity." □

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Trailer Type Experience (check all that apply): Flatbed Heavy Hauling/Specialized Moving Van
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License # _____ Exp. Date _____ Prov/State Issued _____ Type _____

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Last Employer _____

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Making sense of rates

Are you charging too much? Not enough? Or both?

By Eric Berard

MONTREAL, Que. – It's a sad reality in the trucking industry, but many carriers don't really know their exact operating costs. The result is that some trucking companies out there actually lose money operating their vehicles, because they accepted contracts that don't even cover their expenses.

Moreover, by doing so they are putting pressure on prices that can negatively affect those who know how to count.

According to expert in pricing Frederik Francois, the key is to break down a fleet's expenses as much as possible in different categories, in accordance to the context where these expenses are made.

President of VISA Concept, a consulting company in the trucking industry, Francois was one of the speakers at a recent educational seminar organized by the Markel Insurance Company in Montreal.

"Pretty much everybody calculates their operating costs. The difference is that some do it more precisely than others," he said, adding that the most common mistake made by carriers, regardless of their size, is to assume that pricing is "costing + X%".

The customers you serve have different requirements. The equipment you use for each differs, as well as the kind of roads your vehicles travel on to get their shipments to their destination. This means that each customer has a different impact on your fuel costs (flat roads vs hills), city routes represent costs that differ from long-haul, a day cab costs less to finance than a big tractor with a sleeper and the context in which each truck is used has a direct impact on its unique maintenance costs.

In a nutshell, if you establish that your average operating costs are "X" and that you add a per-

centage of "Y" to make a profit, you put yourself in a position where you are charging too much to certain customers (and your competition might take them away from you) and not enough for others, actually losing money instead of making a profit.

There is a lot of number crunching to be done, but in the end it is worth doing it, insists Francois, adding that a fleet needs to take into account all of its costs when establishing rates, not only the ones generated by the operations. "Always remember to take into account all your administration costs, such as vehicle registration, permits purchase, drug and alcohol testing, etc," he says. "Also, when calculating your operating costs, make sure to involve all the departments of the company, not only accounting, because many factors can have an effect on costs."

He gives a simple example: "The cost of a driver is more than his pay and benefits. When he or she is on vacation, you have to replace him or her, and there are costs associated with that."

He also advises to verify how many empty runs you make and in what geographic area they occur. An empty trailer on a flat surface doesn't cost the same as an empty truck in a hilly area.

Of course, spec'ing your trucks right for your application will help to lower the costs. This is why it is so important to know and understand every aspect of your operations.

Waiting time and the time it takes to load and unload the trucks are also important source of expenses.

Yet, they differ from one customer to another.

This is why it is important to calculate these and establish your rate accordingly.

Customers with effective dock crews should not be paying for lousy shippers.

simple.

Yes, it does take time and a lot of math.

But having the most effective method of establishing rates for different customers will allow you to offer the most competitive prices to the customers who deserve it, and maybe abandon others that actually make you lose time and money, allowing your sales team to better focus on potential new markets that offer better business opportunities. □

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When calculating your operation costs, include those generated by driver turnover.

Replacing a driver costs an average of \$10,000.

Besides, it will take a while before the new hire is as productive as the experienced driver who left.

This also represents a cost.

In the end, the process is quite

Worth Repeating:

The following are some comments on rates, made recently during *Decisions 2008*, our annual Shipper-Carrier Roundtable. Video of the entire discussion can be viewed on our Web site, trucknews.com. Just enter the multimedia section of the site and select the video of your choice.

"Contracts in a lot of cases don't seem to be worth the paper they are written on. No sooner do you sign it than you find there is rate action taking place and you are back revisiting the customer. Probably in 85% of the RFPs that we've responded to the incumbent carrier that had the business re-secures the business but what the shipper has been able to do is rationalize the rates to a market level. From a carrier's standpoint, also, I don't know why anyone would sign an agreement based on the volatility of currency and crude."

– **Scott Johnston, former president and COO Yanke Group Shipper-Carrier Roundtable Series, Transportation Media**

"You don't do yourself any favours if your suppliers are losing money. The smart shippers understand it isn't just about price. It's about price and service."

– **Robert Ballantyne, president, Canadian Industrial Transportation Association Shipper-Carrier Roundtable Series, Transportation Media**

"I think trucking by nature always has had fairly low barriers to entry and there have been commodity providers that don't know the implications of their pricing and that creates a 'buyer beware' situation. I think the purchasing model sometimes is difficult because it often is not an enterprise function that considers the whole business. You have someone in a corner office that is judged by how low they can get the rates and often at risk to the business."

– **Scott Smith, president, J.D. Smith & Sons Shipper-Carrier Roundtable Series, Transportation Media**

"I think it would be nice if carriers and shippers could work cooperatively to deal with improving efficiencies rather than to drive down rates to below cost, which is what happens typically in such situations. When times get tough it seems it's every man for himself and shippers look to wherever they can get rate relief because they are under cost pressure themselves within their own organization."

– **Doug Munro, president, M-O Freightworks Shipper-Carrier Roundtable Series, Transportation Media** □



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Pardons and waivers

What works when?

By Jan Westell

MONTREAL, Que. – Canadians may be pardoned in their own country for crimes committed in the past. But the US government has a long memory, and doesn't always recognize the Canadian justice system's ability to wipe the slate clean.

Since 9/11, security has intensified at the US border and Canadian drivers who have a criminal record – even if they have been pardoned by the Canadian government – are likely to be turned back, unless they have the proper paperwork to gain access. One of the most predictable questions to be asked by US border guards is about past drug use, even for the most minor incident.

"Drugs are the big one," says Michael Ashby, founder and communications director of the National Pardon Centre (NPC), which operates offices in Montreal and Calgary.

NPC is a non-profit agency that assists those who seek a pardon from a crime, and/or seek temporary access to the US.

In the latter case, the candidate will require a US entry waiver, which is granted by the US government, and allows legal access to the US – despite the existence of a criminal record – if the applicant qualifies.

In this line of work, Ashby has heard plenty of horror stories about interactions with US border guards.

One incident he recalls involved a client who was asked by a border guard if he had ever used drugs.

The client admitted to "smoking a joint," years ago, and was subsequently refused entry.

"It's a bit of overkill to me," says Ashby, of their response to an offence that the Canadian had never been charged with or arrested for in his own country.

"To me, it's a little bit hysterical."

Ashby has helped drivers whose lucrative US long-haul careers have been sidelined, as well as clients whose family trip to Disneyland has been halted because of a minor crime, committed long ago.

"It's sad for families on holidays," he says. "For truckers, it's nasty, because all of a sudden a career can come to an end, right away."

A Canadian pardon is ultimately granted by the federal government, which seals the entire criminal record.

All charges and all convictions are removed and kept separate from active criminal files stored in the RCMP database. However, Canadian pardons are not recognized by the US. If the US Department of Homeland Security or FBI (which has access to RCMP files even before a pardon is granted) know about the crime before the record was sealed, the US

justice agencies have this information "forever," says Ashby. Despite a pardon, there is an expectation at the US border to divulge past crimes. "You are breaking American law by not telling them," he adds.

The application process for a US waiver can be a costly and time-consuming process, and if approved, the time period for entry is limited to a one-, three- or five-year travel period. Yet, not all Canadians with criminal backgrounds require a US waiver according to Paulette Gauthier-Roy, of Pardons Inc., located in Sudbury and Toronto.

She says that if a crime was minor in nature, and designated a "summary conviction," which is equivalent to the US "misdemeanor," crime classification, there should be no problem at the border.

"Usually with one summary conviction, (the visitor) doesn't need a waiver," says Gauthier-Roy, who creates a "travel portfolio" for frequent visitors to the US, that specifies the minor nature of the former crime and incorporates all supporting documentation.

"I do it for drivers who have a problem at the US border," she says, of a comparably minor process that still doesn't offer any guarantee at the border. "Sometimes they let them in. Sometimes they don't."

Gauthier-Roy believes there has been a misunderstanding about this minor category of crime (not related to drug use), on both sides of the border.

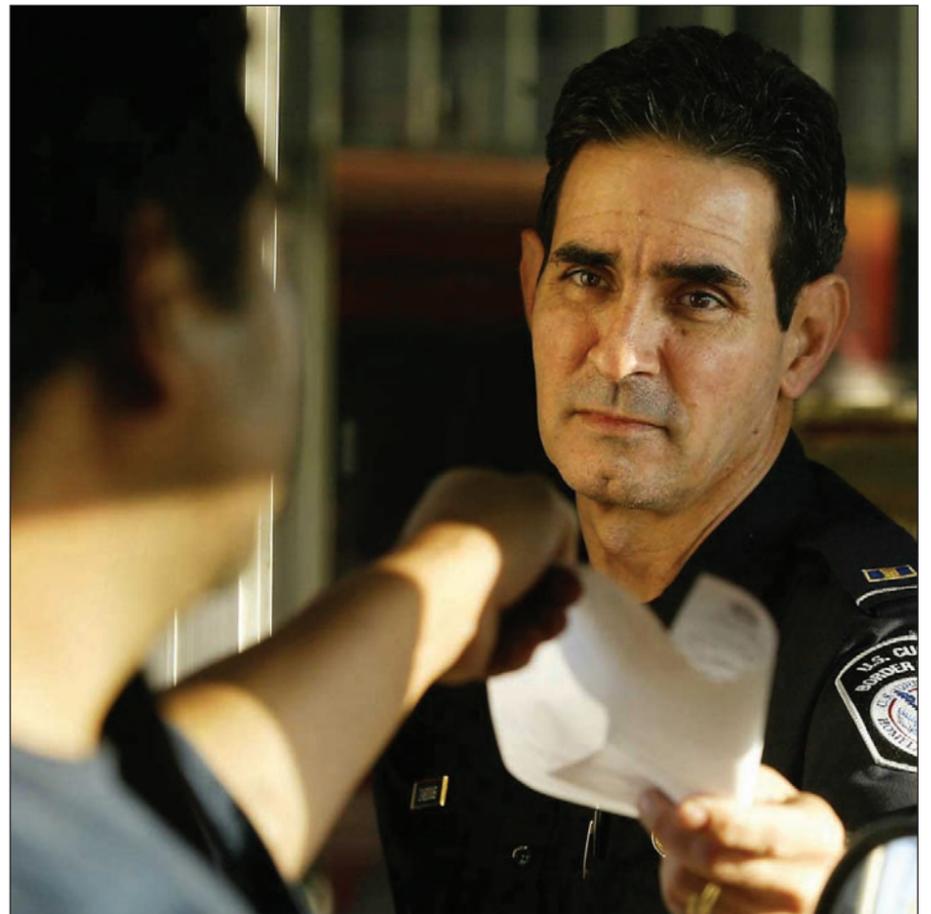
She says that even the US Department of Homeland Security has advised Canadian applicants, after the application has been approved, that a US waiver is not required in the future, once the minor nature of the crime has been ascertained.

On the other hand, a crime that has been designated an "indictment," or as it is classified in the US, a "felony," requires a waiver without question, says Gauthier-Roy.

Canadian Pardon Service (CPS) based in Toronto, offers another take on US Homeland Security regulations that determines a requirement for a waiver, whether it's a summary conviction or by indictment: "It depends on whether it's viewed as moral turpitude," says the vice-president of business and marketing, Peter Dimakos, who warns that truck drivers should pay all speeding tickets because US justice agents may take exception to unpaid tickets and possibly confiscate a licence.

"It's not revoked in Canada: It's revoked in the US," says Dimakos who had a client who was incarcerated in the US for not paying a speeding ticket in New York State, and now has a criminal record.

"It's imperative that they do understand what the repercussions



GOOD TO GO?: Understanding the differences between pardons and waivers can save you a lot of trouble at the border.

are," he adds.

CPS warns against crossing the border without checking on the status of a former crime, even with a juvenile charge – whether the latter was an "absolute" or a "conditional discharge" from the Canadian justice system.

"With a criminal record and without a US waiver, you may suffer the embarrassment of being arrested, detained, deported, and possibly having the vehicle you arrived at the border with, and property in it, seized, even if you are not the owner or the driver," states CPS.

For those who may require further legal assistance with this type of cross-border dilemma, Glenn Matthews of Siskinds LLP, offers unique credentials. As a lawyer who specializes in immigration services, he is also licensed in the US, which gives him an intimate, technical understanding of the le-

gal process to seek access to Canada's southern neighbour, he claims. Like Pardons Inc., and CPS, the London, Ont.-based lawyer advises that not all crimes require a waiver, yet not all US border personnel are necessarily cognizant of the technical idiosyncrasies of the US waiver parameters.

"In fairness to them, they are not given that training," says Matthews, who notes that one particular exception to the US waiver requirement is shoplifting, which is a crime, but one is often considered petty theft and typically "forgiven."

Fees for pardons with all the companies listed, run from \$300 to \$625 and the cost for a US waiver is \$395 to \$1,000. In addition, US application fee for a waiver is US\$545, payable to the Department of Homeland Security. □

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Dalton and the Bandit

By Edo van Belkom

Mark was headed west. At the Salisbury Big Stop outside Moncton, he'd nearly caught a thief who had broken into Mother Load. He'd chased the guy through the parking lot and down onto the Trans-Canada, and just when he was starting to gain on the guy, a car pulled up on them. The guy hopped in and a second later they were gone...the guy and Mark's stuff.

After that Mark wanted nothing else but to pick up loads, drive west, and make money. But just because that's what Mark wanted didn't mean things would work out that way. Sure, Mark was minding his own business, but trouble always seemed to have a way of finding him no matter how hard he tried to hide from it.

That night Mark was at a truck stop just outside Thunder Bay, preparing to turn in for the night. The temperature outside was just above freezing and the forecast was calling for a drop of five or more degrees before sunrise. That was colder than it had been the past few nights and Mark would have to start up his auxiliary power unit if he wanted to stay warm through the night.

There had been a time when Mark laughed at drivers who'd spent thousands of dollars on APUs when leaving the engine idling kept the cab just as warm without the use of any extra of special equipment. But then someone explained the numbers to him and he'd been sold. For example, auxiliary heaters use 5% the fuel of an idling engine, so the fuel that an idling engine uses in one hour can run an auxiliary heater for 20 hours. If you left your engine idling overnight for say, six hours, you could run an auxiliary heater on the same amount of fuel for 120 hours. It didn't take a genius to figure out that an APU was a money saver, so Mark had had one installed years ago. As a result his idle time was down to less than 5%, which meant nearly all of his fuel costs went to hauling loads.

Mark turned on the heater and listened. It was a bit noisy, especially when he first started it up, but it would quiet down later on when it warmed up and everything was running hot. It probably wouldn't hurt to get the thing looked at, but in the meantime the noise was soft and comforting – white noise that helped him to fall asleep.

Just after sunrise, Mark awoke refreshed. The cab was toasty and the auxiliary heater was still running, softly humming now as opposed to the hard grinding it had done when he'd first got

it started. Mark got into his driving clothes, tidied up his sleeper, then climbed into the driver's seat. The truck stop he was at had a restaurant, but he knew of this other stop down the highway that provided customers with free Internet access while serving the best chocolate chip pancakes on the Trans-Canada. He turned the key, let the glow plugs warm up, then scanned the gauges to check that everything was in order.

That's when something strange caught his eye.

"That can't be right," he muttered under his breath.

He leaned forward for a closer look and tapped the glass, but the needle on his fuel gauge didn't move. It was still all the way to the left – Empty.

That was impossible. He'd filled his tanks last night before turning in. They'd been full then, and empty now.

How?

Mark turned off the ignition and got out of the truck. Maybe the tank was cracked or had a leak, or a fuel line was broken and the fuel had drained out overnight. If that were the case he'd be able to smell the fuel, nevermind see evidence of it on the ground, but there was no sign of spilled fuel anywhere on the pavement beneath Mother Load. Mark got down onto the ground and crawled under his truck, but there was no sign of a leak or any damage to his tanks. He got back up and pulled the engine cowling forward to check all of his lines and hoses. All of them were in tact and dry.

He closed and secured the cowling then looked again at the tank, this time checking the cap on top of it. Aha! The cap was slightly askew and off-center. Mark tried to turn it, but it was stuck. Stuck as if someone had tried putting it back in a hurry, but gave up when the threads misaligned and the thing wouldn't turn anymore.

For a moment Mark wondered if he'd put the cap on that way himself and the fuel had evaporated from the tank, but

that was silly. Hundreds of gallons of diesel didn't dry up overnight. Obviously he'd been robbed.

"Son of a..." he muttered under his breath.

How could one trucker steal another trucker's fuel?

Mark let out a long sigh. He knew the answer.

To make money in the trucking business you had to either increase revenue or decrease expenses. Increasing revenue wasn't easy because that meant new customers, something that took time and hard work. On the other hand, the money saved by cutting fuel went directly into a driver's pocket and there was always some way to use less fuel. So,

low trucker while he'd been sleeping inside his truck just a few feet away. After breakfast, Mark logged onto the Internet to check his e-mail. Like chocolate chip pancakes, the Internet was quickly becoming one of his guilty pleasures. From e-mail to Facebook, from Google to Myspace, the Internet was a way for him to visit friends, learn about the world around him, or just to pass some time during a reset. YouTube was Mark's favourite for that, and he logged onto the video sharing site on a regular basis, always finding something to make him smile. He usually typed things like "stupid people" or "silly animals" into the search engine, but today he tried "stupid truckers" and



if you paid nothing for fuel because you stole it, then just about everything you earned was profit. It was a brilliant business strategy, but as dishonest as a three-dollar bill. What made it worse was that to do it, you had to steal from a fellow trucker, a brother, one of your own.

Mark was furious. While he could understand, maybe even tolerate someone stealing loose change and CDs from his cab, stealing fuel out of his tanks was like taking food out of his mouth, money out of his pocket.

Mark didn't know how, but he would even the score...after breakfast.

The chocolate chip pancakes were like comfort food for Mark, helping him forget how he'd been ripped off by a fel-

"idiot truckers."

What he saw were clips of truckers driving the wrong way, getting caught under low bridges, or stuck in the mud. There were also semis in highway crashes and trucks that drove away without anyone behind the wheel. It always made Mark feel good to see other truckers in worse shape than he was. It was a good feeling, but today it was short-lived. That's because before getting underway, Mark had to top up his tanks again, and as he did the anger he'd felt earlier came over him all over again.

Sure, YouTube could make him laugh, but paying for fuel twice made him mad...in every sense of the word. □

- Mark Dalton returns next month in Part 2 of Dalton and the Bandit

The continuing adventures of Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator
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REEFERS

California-compliant?

What you need to know if you haul refrigerated freight into or out of the Golden State

By James Menzies

TORONTO, Ont. – Even by California standards, this is a strange one. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has announced sweeping changes to the emissions requirements of trailer refrigeration units (what most of us simply call ‘reefers’), which will impact all refrigerated fleets that cross the state line. Phase 1 of the new regulations is slated to go into effect Dec. 31, 2008.

As part of Phase 1, TRUs with a model year of 2001 or older will need to comply with the regulation’s new low-emission standard. Normally when an equipment-related regulation is passed, existing equipment is grandfathered – or exempted – from the rule. Not in this case. In fact, older equipment is the principle target of CARB’s proposed TRU rules.

But that’s not the only thing that’s unusual about the rule. There’s also a not-so-minor detail that has yet to be ironed out. With the implementation date now just six months away, CARB still has yet to receive the necessary approval from its own parent group, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Before the impending new standards can be enforced, the federal EPA must grant a waiver of pre-emption under the federal Clean Air Act. What was supposed to be a mere formality, has now developed into a prolonged and ongoing saga that has thrown the future of the rules into question.

The American Trucking Associations (ATA) has voiced its displeasure with the proposed rules, arguing that the cost of compliance is too heavy a burden for the trucking industry to bear. With the ATA threatening legal action if the changes are approved, it appears the federal EPA is having second thoughts about providing the necessary waiver.

“This seems to be headed for some kind of legal battle either way,” explained Ignacio

Aguerrevere, director of marketing with TRU manufacturer, Carrier Transcold. “The implication for customers is that on December 31 of this year, the regulations are supposed to go into effect. If it’s denied by the EPA, then people don’t need to do anything. But if it’s approved by the EPA, it’s going to be challenged, but in the meantime it holds water.”

If you’re a refrigerated fleet that does business in California, sitting idly by and waiting for the dust to settle between CARB, the federal EPA and the ATA is not an advisable compliance strategy, Aguerrevere warned.

“Customers need to start thinking about their replacement strategies, regardless of what way it goes,” he suggested.

Scott Bates, aftermarket product manager with Thermo King, recently told *Truck West* “The longer the delay, the harder it is for customers to become compliant by the Dec. 31 deadline. If a customer is waiting (for the EPA waiver to be granted), they may only have a few months or less” to get ready.

Refrigerated goods transporters seem to have divided into two camps: one that is already well on its way to bringing its reefer fleet into compliance with the pending rules; and the other which is taking a wait-and-see approach.

The new rules include two performance standards: the Low-Emission TRU In-Use Performance Standard (LETRU); and the more stringent Ultra-Low Emission TRU In-Use Performance Standard (ULETRU). As of Dec. 31, 2008, all TRUs with a model year of 2001 or older must meet the LETRU standard.

Reefers with an engine built in 2002 must comply with the LETRU standard by Dec. 31, 2009. Those built in 2003 will have to go straight to ULETRU levels by Dec. 31, 2010 and all reefer motors built after 2003 have seven years from their model year to



WHAT TO DO?: If you want to haul into or out of California, you may have to run newer reefer units.

comply with ULETRU levels. The full details of the proposed regulation can be viewed at: www.arb.ca.gov/diesel/tru.htm.

The easiest, and possibly the most cost-effective way, to comply with the rules as of Dec. 31 is to adopt a seven-year life-cycle for any reefers that will be operated in California. Most larger fleets already employ shorter trade cycles, according to Jerry Duppler, trailer product manager with Thermo King.

“Historically, some of the larger long-haul fleets have determined that in five to seven years, there’s a tipping point where they feel it’s advantageous to them to bring in new equipment with new warranties,” Duppler said, adding “those trade cycles tend to change with economic conditions.”

For most Canadian carriers that haul into and out of California, that seems the most logical approach. Sending only newer-model TRU-equipped trailers to the Golden State and adopting a shorter trade-in cycle should be enough to ensure compliance with the impending rules. It’s the local fleets domiciled in California that may find the rules the most difficult to meet, Duppler pointed out.

“A lot of these fleets domiciled in California are distribution fleets and they tend to have not planned trade

cycles of less than seven years, and this has put significant challenges in front of them in terms of changing their basic operating model,” he points out.

Another option is to replace only the engine on older TRUs. Aguerrevere said this is a viable option if the rest of the reefer’s components and the reefer itself remain in good shape. However, he added “If you run a lot of hours, you may want to change the reefer altogether.”

Short of replacing older reefers or their engines, the remaining compliance option is to equip older units with a CARB-approved emissions control device, such as a diesel particulate filter.

A list of approved emission control devices is available at: www.arb.ca.gov/diesel/verdev/verde_v.htm.

But DPFs and catalysts are costly add-ons, which makes this option undesirable for most fleets.

While the cost of complying with California’s impending new TRU emissions restrictions may be enough to make you cringe, the cost of non-compliance is even greater.

If you knowingly violate the rules, fines ranging from US\$1,000-\$50,000 per day – or even imprisonment – are possible. □

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Cool new ideas for reefer fleets



WHAT'S NEW?: There are some new reefer capabilities available that can reduce costs – and the risk of spoilage.

By James Menzies

TORONTO, Ont. – Trailer refrigeration units are becoming more versatile and intelligent, arming fleets that haul temperature-sensitive cargo with additional tools that help improve efficiency and customer service. *Truck West* took a closer look at some new developments in the refrigerated transport world that have recently caught our attention:

Intelligent set points

Both Thermo King and Carrier Transicold now have an option available with certain controllers that provides commodity profiles, allowing a driver to easily select the optimum refrigeration temperature for whatever product happens to be on-board. Thermo King's OptiSet + is a new offering that will be available this summer on units equipped with its SR2 controller. It contains a library of nearly 500 commodities and the ideal temperature set-point for each of them. A driver can simply select the cargo he's hauling from the menu and the reefer will automatically be set at the optimum temperature for that type of freight.

Jerry Duppler, trailer product manager with Thermo King, said "The system makes it very, very easy to program the refrigeration unit for optimum refrigeration and it makes the driver's job that much easier. It will contribute to the elimination of errors, and that could be a big advantage for drivers from a peace of mind standpoint."

Since many reefer fleets try to balance the need for optimum refrigeration with their quest for maximum fuel economy, many of the profiles built into the OptiSet+ system will provide an acceptable temperature range, rather than a single set-point, Duppler explained.

"Really tight temperature control in the trailer will cost you a little more in terms of fuel con-

sumption. If you can relax the temperature requirements a bit, you can save fuel," Duppler said. "A lot of our profiles will give an acceptable range and then our customer and the shipper can decide the desired set-point for that particular shipper. Customers may start by using our profile in the library and then modify that for a specific shipper. You can change profiles any way you want and can create profiles from scratch."

This summer, OptiSet+ will be available for single-temperature TRUs, with a multi-temp version expected to be released in the future. Software updates will be available for older SR2 controllers, so fleets with existing Thermo King reefers can visit their dealer to receive the upgrade for their existing units.

Carrier Transicold has been offering an intelligent controller of its own for several years. Dubbed IntelliSet, the feature is an option on Carrier TRUs with the company's Advanced controller.

Ignacio Aguerrevere, director of marketing with Carrier Transicold, said the system was first launched to help fleets cope with rising driver turnover rates. It made the training process for new hires simpler and also made life easier for the driver.

"We wanted the driver focused on driving, not focused on the reefer," Aguerrevere explained.

He likens the system to the interface found on most microwave ovens, which allow you to simply select the item you're cooking rather than manually entering the time required to cook it. Once you click the popcorn button on the microwave, it knows exactly how long to cook the item based on its internal settings.

TRUs equipped with IntelliSet operate in much the same way, Aguerrevere explained.

"You can have 100 drivers, and all of them will be hauling lettuce exactly the same way, with no er-

rors, and getting the best possible fuel consumption," he said.

Plugging it in

With record fuel prices placing enormous cost pressures on fleets, companies are taking a closer look at ways to reduce their fuel consumption. Fortunately for refrigerated fleets, significant fuel savings can be achieved by choosing a reefer with electric standby capabilities.

Carrier's Vector 1800MT TRU features the company's Deltek diesel-electric technology, which allows the operator to plug into a shore power supply when the truck is parked.

Many companies in the food distribution business load their trailers overnight and then leave the reefer running in the yard until the driver shows up in the morning to deliver the load.

Based on \$4/gallon diesel and current electricity prices, the cost of running a typical reefer unit in electric mode is about 66% cheaper than running the diesel engine, Aguerrevere said. But when doing a quick conversion to Canadian figures (where diesel costs more and electricity can be cheaper), the savings are even greater than promised in the US. The reefer engine typically consumes 1.1 gallon/hr (4.16 litres/hr), meaning it will cost about \$39.60 in Canuck bucks to keep the load cool for eight hours while running the diesel engine, based on \$1.19/litre diesel. By comparison, it takes 15.23 kilowatts per hour to keep a typical load refrigerated in electric mode, or 90 cents/hr at today's electricity rates in Ontario, totaling just \$7.20 for an eight-hour wait. That's an 82% reduction.

Thermo King has also noted increased interest in electric standby availability on its own reefers.

"It has gained in popularity recently and we expect it to continue," said Duppler. "We've seen a significant increase in orders of

units with electric standby and inquiries about the costs of operation."

Duppler wouldn't be coaxed into providing a payback estimate for electric standby, since there are too many variables to consider. However, he did say that a payback can be achieved fairly quickly, especially if the reefer can be switched to electric mode during loading and unloading. All that's needed is a power source.

If the power cord should become disconnected when a reefer is operating on electric standby, it senses the loss of power and restarts the diesel engine. Duppler notes there are maintenance savings available as well.

When operating in electric mode, hoses, belts and other components connected to the reefer's diesel engine are at rest.

Keeping it clean

A nifty new product for refrigerated trailers caught my eye at this year's Mid-America Trucking Show. Thermo King's parent company, Ingersoll-Rand has developed an environmental management system (EMS), which can be mounted inside a refrigerated trailer to provide continuous air purification.

The trailer version of the product, which is already widely used in warehouses and cold storage facilities, is about the size of a shoe box, Wayne Benson, director of sales and marketing for the EMS product with Ingersoll-Rand, told *Truck West*.

"We create a non-thermal plasma field, and take air from inside the (trailer) and run it across this plasma," Benson explained. "When air from the (trailer) runs across the plasma, the oxygen in the air is broken down into reactive oxygen species."

It sounds complex – and it is – but what's important is that pure air comes out the other side of the unit. Also exiting the unit are some more of these 'reactive oxygen species,' which seek and destroy bacteria and viruses throughout the entire trailer, effectively providing "surface sanitation."

The end result is a much cleaner trailer interior which can noticeably extend the shelf life of perishable cargo, Benson said.

"It slows the ripening process of fruits and vegetables," he explained, noting a truckload of berries from California will arrive in Canada looking fresher and ready to enjoy a longer shelf life.

But is it really necessary? Startlingly, Benson said refrigerated trailers are often home to some pretty nasty stuff. A reefer's evaporator coil, for instance, provides a cool, damp surface that's a perfect breeding ground for bacteria.

"We've done some testing of coils and air sampling in trailers and found very high colony-forming units per cubic metre in reefer trailers," Benson noted.

"One particular reefer trailer had the number of colony-forming units per cubic metre that was near that of a killing floor at a beef plant. It can be fairly bad." □



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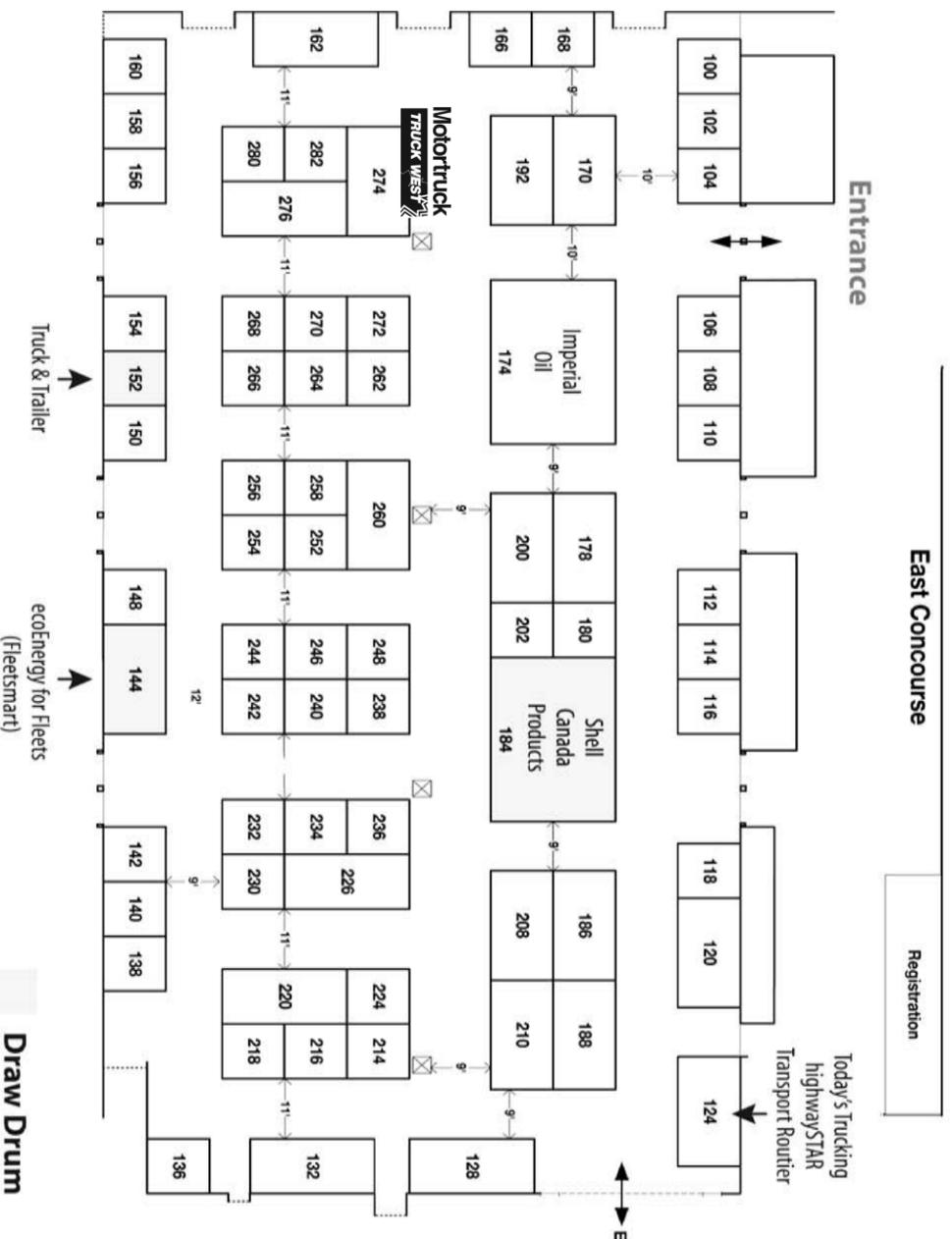
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- Arnold Bros Transport Ltd. 162
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- Axle Surgeons 938
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- Beaver Truck Centre Volvo 410
- Bergstrom, Inc. 302
- Big Freight Systems Inc. 828
- Bison Transport 624
- Calmont Leasing Ltd 616
- Canadian Linen and Uniform Services 930
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- Carriers Edge 142
- Castrol-Wakefield Canada Inc. 210
- Classic Capital Inc. 106
- Coast 2 Coast Business Pages Ltd. 234

- Connexion Truck Centre Ltd. 716
- Cramaro Tarpaulin Systems 244
- Cummings Western Canada 800
- Custom Truck Sales Inc. 430
- Day and Ross Inc 840
- Denray Tire Ltd. 514
- De-On Supply 118
- Diesel Services Group (DSG Canada) 188 & 190
- Doepker Trailer Sales Ltd. 300
- Drive Products 810
- Driver Check Inc. 148
- ecoEnergy for Fleets (FleetSmart) 144
- Federal Mogul Canada Ltd. 224
- Fleetstop Trailers LTD. 908
- Fort Garry Ind. Ltd. 330
- Freightliner Manitoba Ltd. 730
- GE Capital Solutions 500
- General Motors Canada 630
- Goodyear/ Fountain Tire 610
- Greenveid CPL Systems 168
- Grote Ind. 102
- Haldex Limited 804
- Harris Transport 156
- Heavy Equipment and Aggregate Truckers Association of Manitoba Inc. 256
- highwaySTAR Magazine 124
- Hougen Canada Inc. 140
- Hunter Engineering Company 818
- IDC Communications 830
- Imperial Oil Ltd. 174
- Infoste/ The Transportation Software Company 186
- Infrastructure and Transportation - Motor Carrier Division 114
- Inlet Equipment 526
- Intergraphics Decal Ltd. 236
- Isumi Commercial 320
- JD Factors 138
- JJ Keller & Associates, Inc. 218
- Kal Tire 301
- Kee Transport 266
- Kindersley Transport Ltd. 322
- Kinedyne Canada Limited 220
- Landau Ford Lincoln Sales Ltd. 238
- Len Dubois Trucking Inc. 104

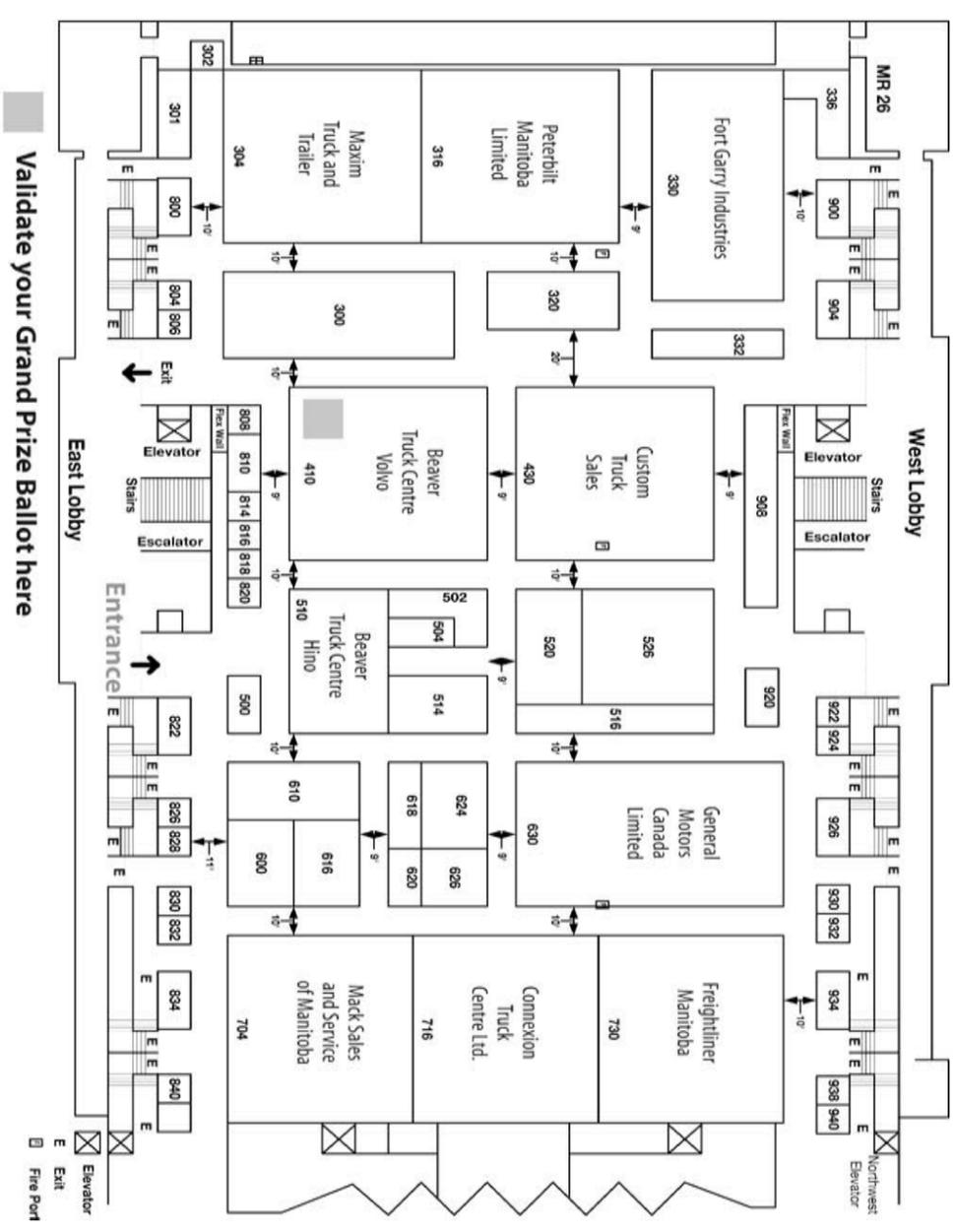
- Leverage Marketing 254
- Lucas Oil Products Canada 618
- Mack Sales and Service of Manitoba Ltd. 704
- Magnum Trailer and Equipment 620
- Magtec 246
- Manac Western 516
- Manitoba Public Insurance 600
- Manitoba Trucking Association 132
- Mascot Truck Parts 932
- Maxim Truck and Trailer 304
- McCann Equipment Ltd. 272
- GMM Brakes 816
- Michelin North America (Canada) Inc. 192
- Mid Canada Distribution and Warehousing 820
- Milligan Bio-Tech Inc. 158
- Money In Motion 808
- NBS Innovative Solutions Ltd. 232
- Ni-Line Commercial Licencing Inc. 108
- Over The Road 926
- Owner-Operator's Business Association of Canada 116
- PeopleNet 100
- 260

- Peterbilt Manitoba Ltd. 316
- Petro-Canada 226
- Pritchard Diesel Tech 180
- Professional Transport Driver Training School Ltd. 214
- Pesco Inc. 262
- Reimer Express Lines Ltd. 834
- Rempel Insurance Broker Ltd. 826
- Roadranger Marketing 626
- Shaw Tracking 120
- Shell Canada Products 184
- Skidd Wheel Indicator 248
- SLH Transport Inc. 178
- Spectra Products Inc. 166
- SS&M Heavy Duty 336
- Ste Anne Co-op 252
- Steve's Livestock Transport 270
- Stewart Warner Corporation of Canada 280
- Superior Technologies 282
- T-Chek Systems 924
- Teleo Supply Co Ltd. 288
- Tenneco Inc. 940
- Tereck Diesel Ltd. 502
- Textlubricants 258
- The Supply Post Newspaper 112
- Today's Trucking Magazine 124
- Toromont Cat 904
- Traction Heavy Duty Parts 934
- Trader Corporation 160
- TransCore Link Logistics 170
- Transport for Christ 202
- Transport Router Magazine 124
- Truck and Trailer West 152
- Truck Weight 110
- Truck West/ Motortruck** 274
- Truckers Supply 240
- Truck-Lite Co. Inc. 900
- United Truck Drivers Association of Canada 264
- Van/Craft Conversions 242
- Wallace International 200
- Washex 230
- Waterous Power Systems 922
- Western Canada Highway News 128
- Western Turbo and Fuel Injection Ltd. 806
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Seeing the light

Get ready for a new warning light when you buy engines in 2010

By John G. Smith

Anyone who ever forgot to tighten the gas cap on their family car will recognize the look of a Malfunction Indicator Light (MIL). The cryptic warning may not tell a driver the exact nature of a problem, but it certainly identifies trouble with the equipment that is used to keep exhaust levels in check. In the case of a loose gas cap, the pressure has dropped in the system used to control evaporative emissions. But who knows? Something else may be wrong.

Truckers better prepare themselves for lights of their own.

Now that equipment such as Exhaust Gas Recirculation systems is reducing the greenhouse gas that is NOx, and new Diesel Particulate Filters are capturing tiny flakes that would otherwise float out of a truck's exhaust stacks, regulators are about to introduce new sensors that will tell drivers whether this equipment is actually working.

The MIL and the diagnostic systems behind them will be phased in between 2010 and 2019, and they represent one of the newest challenges to the makers of modern truck engines.

The most popular engines will be affected first. In 2010, the light will need to be included on the dashboards of trucks that are equipped with the best-selling engine in a manufacturer's most popular engine family. By 2013, the entire engine family will be included in the rules. And by 2016, all engines will need to be equipped with the lights and sensors that come with them, explains Kenworth's Keith Doorenbos. Warranties for these new warning systems will also need to expand, beginning at five years and 160,000 km, and eventually reaching 10 years and 700,000 km.

At first, the equipment will need to spot failed components that cause a five-fold increase in emissions, but the tolerance levels will tighten with each passing year.

"These rules are actually quite complex for those of us who are manufacturing and have to go through the certification process," says Kevin Otto of Cummins.

Consider the different sensors that will be needed to power such a light. Sensors will need to watch over exhaust-cleaning components such as the EGR valves and any NOx-reducing catalysts. (The latter equipment could be required to slash NOx to levels that are even lower than those that exist today). Engine makers, meanwhile, will

need to use these sensors to generate fault codes about specific problems, says Doorenbos. Some of the monitors will run all the time, while others will need to run once per "drive cycle"—a period that includes 10 minutes of running time, 30 seconds of idling, and five minutes of operating time at a 15% load.

The sensors themselves will need to work in a few different ways, adds Tim Gundrum, who is responsible for on-board diagnostic certification and compliance at International Truck and Engine. An "out of range" sensor, for example will help to identify readings that don't make sense—such as an ambient temperature sensor that says it's 200 F outside. Rationality monitoring (also known as "in-range diagnostics") will compare a sensor's reading to other information that should come with it, such as the increase in boost pressure that should accompany higher engine torque. If the voltage on a related sensor does not jump high enough, the diagnostic system will

understand that there is a problem with the sensor.

All of this data will be delivered over a proven communications network, such as the J1939 systems used on today's truck engines, or the OBD-II systems on your family's car.

"(Exhaust Gas Recirculation) diagnostics are not new. Many of these systems have had these in place," says Greg Gillham, manager of on-board diagnostics with Detroit Diesel. Indeed, the sensors on a 2007 engine will monitor whether EGR rates are too low or too high. But there is a difference. In 2010, the sensors will need to identify specific issues such as a stuck EGR valve that will allow an engine to spew an excessive amount of particulate matter, or the high intake temperatures on an EGR cooler that can lead to higher NOx levels.

The oxygen sensors found in today's passenger vehicles will also have a heavy-duty diesel equivalent in a future NOx sensor—something that will be particularly important as NOx levels drop from 2.5 to 2.0 grams per brake horsepower hour.

This is where things get really tricky. The more sensitive the diagnostics become, the greater the chance for a false reading, explains Cummins' Ben Zwissler. A simple drop in pressure can identify a cracked or melting Diesel

Particulate Filter, but this condition could also be caused by the simple accumulation of soot or a change in temperature.

"The OBD rules will really add a significant amount of regulation to the industry. That is going to affect vehicle maintenance," Otto warns. "Understanding how these very, very complex diagnostic systems work will be critical if you're going to do a good job in troubleshooting."

The good news for fleets is that the pending rules require service tools that can read fault codes on any model of engine. Still, clearing the fault codes may be easier said than done. The lights will remain lit for three driving cycles unless they're cleared by a service tool, says Jim Roal, Caterpillar's diagnostic technical steward. Some monitors will also require road tests to determine whether a troubled component has actually been fixed.

Technicians will also need to rely more on the sensors to identify related faults, adds Zwissler. "(You) will have to trust the engine to tell you what's going on."

Drivers, meanwhile, will have to trust the technicians. The performance of the truck may seem unchanged.

The only sign of trouble will come in the form of a glowing dashboard light. □

@ARTICLECATEGORY:847:

Refine and adapt: You can troubleshoot many VDA challenges on your own

By John G. Smith

Any modern-day mechanic should be forgiven if he shakes his head at the thought of a new service tool. Just ask him about the difficulties that have emerged when connecting a PC to one of today's Electronic Control Modules. Technical support centres are flooded by calls about Vehicle Datalink Adaptors (VDAs) that don't seem to work, even though everything promises to comply with RP1210a—a common communications standard developed through the Technology and Maintenance Council of the American Trucking Associations.

Today's adaptors are certainly better than those that existed in the mid-1990s, when every Electronic Control Module had its own proprietary connector. In those days, shops needed a web of adaptors and cables to address the various needs, says Ken DeGrant of the Dearborn Group, which produces RP1210a adaptors.

But the remaining problems can still be frustrating to a technician who is paid by the job, adds Lee Lackey of Noregon Systems, which also provides the adaptors. "They're losing valuable time fixing the problem, and spending time on hold to talk to one of us propeller heads."

And there's nothing more frustrating than the news that a supposedly "compliant" computer application will only work with a specific type of adaptor.

The good news is that there are steps to troubleshoot most VDA challenges:

1. *Have a clear idea of the application you want to use before buying an adaptor.* Remember that some applications will only work with specific models of connectors.
2. *Look to see if the application can even be configured for your adaptor.* Some applications require users to select between a J1708 and J1939 communications protocol.
3. *Check the condition of the "ini" file on a shop's Windows 3.1 computers.* "If you have an application, and

that application cannot see the adaptor you installed, you might be dealing with a mangled .ini file," DeGrant suggests. The problem comes in the form of extra commas and spaces that can sometimes appear between the names of the various adaptors. Simply remove the extra commas and spaces with Windows Notepad, or download a program that will clean the file automatically.

4. *Accept the installation wizards.* If a USB adaptor is plugged into a different port on a Windows computer, a "hardware found" wizard will appear. Instead of choosing "cancel" because you have installed the adaptor in the past, keep selecting "Next" to allow the wizard to do its job. Each port will require its own driver. Granted, this step presents one significant challenge for fleets that use Windows Vista operating systems, Lackey warns. Technicians may not have the right to install the software.

5. *Ensure the USB driver did not "flake out."* While this is not exactly a technical term, it describes a situation that can happen to some USB drivers, DeGrant says. Unplug everything, wait five seconds, and then reconnect the adaptors to see if the connection is recovered. Then try to reboot the computer before calling an adaptor supplier.

6. *Close other applications.* Some VDAs can only support a single application at a time, so ensure that other computer applications are not simply minimized.

7. *Be prepared to realize that this may be your computer's fault.* The makers of VDAs can all refer to a specific model of Compaq computer that had troublesome ports in early 2000. "Windows was never built as an operating system to do these kinds of things. It was really meant to be an office," Lackey adds.

8. *Always use a hard-wired connection since the signal from a Wi-Fi device can be affected by everything from a fluorescent light to the cycling of a nearby air conditioner.* "We all have wireless versions of adaptors," DeGrant adds. "We recommend you don't use it to flash the (Electronic Control Unit). That's an easy way to turn an ECU into a toaster." □

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Better brakes

Stopping distances are shrinking, equipment is becoming lighter. What does the future hold for your brakes?

By John G. Smith

Changes to the trucking industry's braking systems can happen in a relatively short period of time. A little more than a decade ago, everybody was still wondering whether a trailer's anti-lock brakes would require a second power cord between tractors and trailers. Some equipment configurations have even emerged with air disc brakes and stability control systems.

There are more changes on the horizon.

Despite delays in its final ruling, the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is on the verge of mandating a large cut in allowable stopping distances. Under current rules, an empty tractor-trailer that travels at 60 mph must be able to stop within 355 feet (108 metres). Regulators are pondering whether that distance should be slashed by 20, 25 or 30%.

Most industry groups have recommended a 25% cut, which could be met with changes that include larger brake linings and drums, and air disc brakes on selected vehicles, says Dan Philpott of MeritorWabco.

More torque

The shorter stopping distances will still present some challenges, however.

"Tire, suspension and chassis structures will be affected by putting more brake torque across the wheel," Philpott explains. If the brakes on a steer axle become more aggressive, there could be an impact on a steering wheel's response during a braking event. Parking brake performance could also be affected because of the reduced burnishing of the brakes on other axles.

Luckily, these issues can be addressed with today's technology. Anti-lock brakes could address the potential of lock-ups caused by higher brake torque, and stability control systems could address other response-related issues.

Regardless of the ruling, the trucking industry will need to comply with these changes within

two years.

That will hardly be the end to the new regulations that involve brake performance. Roadside inspectors, for example, can now issue out-of-service violations because of the results from a Performance-Based Brake Tester, notes Accuride technical manager Steve Howse. Rather than simply measuring the travel of a push rod, this equipment will be able to determine if the brakes will actually stop a tractor-trailer within an allowable distance.

A bigger issue may be the recent addition of anti-lock brakes into the Level 1 out-of-service criteria.

"One of the reasons is, the key to all new electronic (stability) technology is the ABS system," he explains, referring to the expanded standards.

The increasing focus on the condition of ABS components could be a challenge since a lot of the equipment is not working as it should be. A study of 1,000 vehicles found a problem with the ABS warning lights on one in six tractors and one in three trailers. That alone has led the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance to ask the US government to require trailer-mounted warning lamps beyond next March.

The light, originally designed as a back-up for in-cab warning lamps, was expected to fade away by that date.

Despite everything that has been put in place, there are bigger changes to come. Indeed, Electronically Controlled Braking Systems (ECBS) and air

disc brakes are already emerging as the technology of the future.

Each option has a lot to offer.

The ECBS equipment, for example, offers a number of advantages over a traditional pneumatic system.

"It's actually a little simpler," explains Vince Lindley of Volvo Trucks North America. A typical ECBS system includes six pneumatic connections compared to the 12 connections that are required on an ABS-equipped tractor-trailer with Automatic Traction Control. It also has four electrical circuits instead of eight.

The advantages don't end there. These systems could electronically track lining wear, integrate brakes into stability control systems, and include the load proportioning capabilities that will adjust brakes for a specific application.

"It does appear to provide a real good integrated solution for applications on hybrids," he adds, referring to how the electronic braking could maximize the amount of power stored by such a system.

Cost, however, is still a challenge. "There are fewer parts under there, but the parts are more expensive," he admits. "It's going to be a lot more than a \$40 relay valve."

In defence of discs

Air disc brakes may also be more expensive than their S-cam counterparts, but they have proven their better stopping capabilities.

"They typically have much better fade performance, they're more reliable through extreme brake applications, (and) they also have a better feel and have less propensity for pulling," says Mark Melletat of MeritorWabco.

Today's designs are far superior to the versions that came before them. Earlier disc designs faced problems including linings that wore out too quickly; pistons and caliper slide mechanisms that would bind because of vibration, distortion and corrosion; and rotor checking.

But engineers have found ways to improve the related parts. Changes to saddle mechanisms have addressed the torque on calipers and pins, and slide pins



BETTER STOPPING: Changes in stopping distance requirements for heavy trucks could mean bigger drum brakes, the switch to disc brakes, or a combination of solutions. Pictured is MeritorWabco's dual-piston disc brake (left) and single-piston option (right). The single-piston offering reduces weight and cost.

have been sealed to protect them from corrosion.

Weights and costs have also been reduced thanks to single-piston designs, which even weigh less than a high-performance drum. New calipers and carriers can be produced with 18 parts rather than the previous 39 components.

The most apparent changes will be seen whenever a mechanic changes the friction material on a disc brake. A common pad profile has replaced the need to use separate pads on the inboard and outboard sides of the brakes. And the pads can now be changed without moving the calipers.

"We're seeing significant improvement in lining and rotor life," Melletat adds. "The pad life has improved significantly."

The need to extend the life of friction material of every sort is even leading engineers to tackle the common issue of rust jacking. That problem – linked to a corroding brake shoe table – can cause a brake lining to crack and pull apart.

Fleets can even contribute to the issue by power washing equipment, since that will drive de-icing solutions into every crack and crevice.

That will attract moisture to the brake shoe table, lead to the unwanted oxidation, and eventually shorten the life of the lining.

"We are not in a position to eliminate rust jacking. There is no magic wand," says John Hawker, senior engineer at Bendix Spicer. But there are potential solutions that could slow the process, he suggests.

Engineers are considering the possibility of friction material with a higher density, although that could be more expensive than traditional formulas. Other options have included new materials such as ceramics, different coatings, new adhesives and sealants.

"We're not stopping," Hawker says of the engineering work.

Nobody is. □

The shield's sacrifice

There has been a long debate about whether or not to use dust shields. The equipment may keep dirt and grime out of the brakes, but it also makes it harder to inspect the condition of linings.

Mark Melletat of MeritorWabco suggests that the shields might have another purpose in these days of corrosive anti-icing solutions.

"It becomes your sacrificial anode," he noted during a recent meeting of the Technology and Maintenance Council. "Your dust shield ends up catching the magnesium chloride, which absorbs the water. Then it starts rusting the dust shield. And dust shields are a lot less expensive than brake shoes." □

Maintenance

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6 Ways to improve fuel mileage

In the shop

By James Menzies

Diesel prices well in excess of a buck a litre appear to be the new reality for fleets and owner/operators in Canada. Survival in these trying times will hinge on your ability to recover fuel price increases from your customers and maximize fuel mileage as much as possible.

Much of a fleet's fuel economy performance is ultimately in the hands of the guy or gal behind the wheel – but optimizing fuel mileage begins in the shop.

Simply put, a well-maintained vehicle performs better, and consequently achieves better fuel mileage, than a poorly-maintained truck. Here are a few tips owner/operators or maintenance managers can employ to improve their MPG.

Maintain proper tire pressures

One of the simplest ways to maximize fuel mileage is to keep tires inflated to the proper pressure.

"Tire pressure can significantly affect fuel mileage, and requires a closer inspection than a thump with a baseball bat," says Ed Saxman, Volvo marketing product manager, drivetrain. "The time it takes to periodically air up all 18 tires to a recommended pressure is well worth it."

For every 10 psi a tire is under-inflated, a driver is penalized with a 1% drop in fuel economy.

Trailer tires have the biggest impact on fuel mileage, and yet these are often the most neglected tires on a tractor-trailer combination. Check tire pressures on tractors and trailers whenever they visit the shop and be sure to insist that drivers perform daily pressure checks to improve fuel mileage.

Check vehicle alignment

To get the best possible fuel mileage, it's crucial the tires are pointed straight down the highway. "A tire that deviates only 1/4 degree from straight ahead will try to travel 10-15 feet sideways for each mile the vehicle travels

forward," according to *Secrets of Better Fuel Economy* a guide on fuel mileage published by Cummins.

Tests performed by Cummins show a tractor-trailer with a steer tire toe-in of 3/8" and a drive axle that's an inch out of alignment will punish fuel mileage to the tune of 2.2%.

It also causes premature tire wear, another unnecessary expense.

Inspect the fan

It takes between 10 and 70 horsepower to drive the fan on a heavy-duty truck engine.

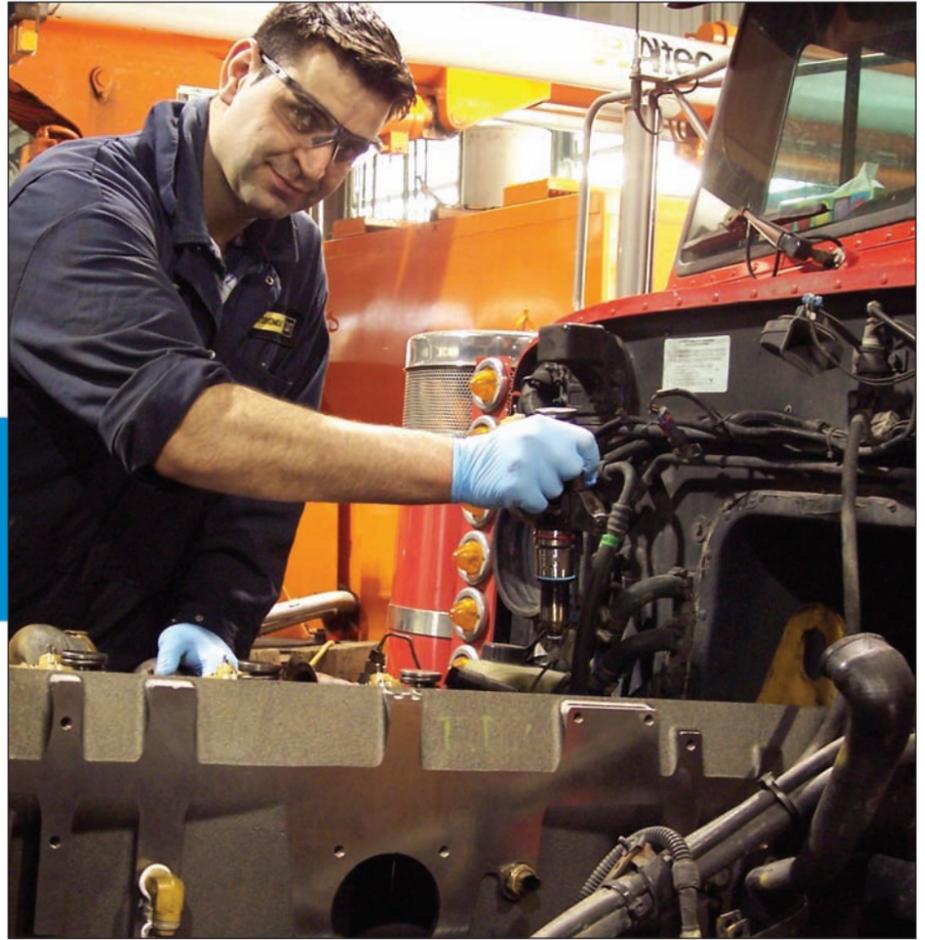
Typically, the fan will run 5-7% of the time the engine is on (depending on the time of year), but a problematic fan will run much more frequently.

Cummins *Secrets of Better Fuel Economy* says common fan problems include: an inoperative fan clutch; faulty thermostatic switch; or low coolant levels. Each of these can increase fan-on time and consume fuel unnecessarily.

About 50% of fan-on time is attributed to the freon compressor operation, according to Cummins. An overcharged system, defective or incorrect head pressure switches or a failed condenser can all cause fuel mileage to suffer.

Limit vehicle speeds

Setting an engine's speed limiter is a simple process, and one that's already employed by many of the best-run Canadian trucking companies. It soon may be law in



SAVING FUEL FROM THE SHOP: While the driver is responsible for maximizing fuel economy from behind the wheel, the maintenance staff also has a role to play. Good maintenance practices can have a significant impact on the amount of diesel burned by a fleet of trucks.

Photo by Adam Ledlow

Ontario and Quebec, but it's not necessary to wait until proposed speed limiter legislation is effective before taking action.

All engines built since the mid-90s have the capability – you simply need to plug into the engine's ECM and manually set the desired top speed.

Slowing truck speeds from 113 km/h to 105 km/h improves mileage by about half a mile per gallon, according to Caterpillar.

The company claims fuel economy suffers about one-tenth of a mile per gallon for every 1 mph (1.6 km/h) over 55 mph (89 km/h) that the truck runs.

Check for air leaks

Leaks in a tractor-trailer's air system can cause the air compressor to overwork, resulting in an increased horsepower draw.

A loaded tractor-trailer driven at 1,500 RPM will require 4.5 hp to operate the air compressor, according to Cummins.

That's fine, but reducing usage

of the compressor will noticeably save fuel.

Cummins states in its MPG guide that an air compressor should run about 5% of the engine run time with 10 to 12 minutes between cycles.

If it's running more frequently than that, there could be a costly problem such as an air leak. Excessive operation of the air compressor can cause a 2% reduction in fuel mileage.

Gear fast, run slow

The gearing of a truck is particularly important if you hope to maximize fuel economy. Trucks spec'd for optimum fuel mileage should be set up to "gear fast, run slow."

For instance, a Cummins ISX running line-haul with loads slightly less than 80,000 lbs would normally be geared to run at 1,450 RPM at normal highway speeds.

If geared for maximum fuel mileage, however, it will be set to run at 1,400 RPM in the top gears. Keeping the RPMs down at highway speeds is a good way to save fuel.

Transmission and rear axle ratios and even tire size are all part of the fuel mileage equation.

Unfortunately, trade-offs are sometimes necessary when gearing for fuel mileage.

Performance characteristics such as startability, torque, gradeability and cruise speed may be impacted by setting the gearing for improved fuel mileage. However, with the cost of diesel now hovering at \$1.20/litre, those are trades that may be worth considering. □

Fuel-saving maintenance tips from Kenworth

Kenworth has published a white paper on maximizing fuel mileage. Included are the following maintenance tips:

- Maintain tire pressure and check tire wear;
- Replace air and fuel filters at proper intervals;
- Keep axles properly aligned;
- Repair any body damage. That front corner of the dinged-up bumper hanging down hurts the vehicle's aerodynamics and fuel economy;
- Use a good synthetic or semi-synthetic oil in the engine and drive axles. Also use a good synthetic transmission fluid;
- Don't use a higher viscosity oil than actually needed for the operating conditions. □



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Maintenance

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Laptop computers Are they tough enough for the shop?

By James Menzies

The laptop has become an essential tool for technicians and owner/operators alike. It's estimated that more than 60% of owner/operators own a laptop, and heavy-duty shops are trending away from proprietary-based diagnostic systems in favour of open architecture PC-based tools, according to Bill Presler, senior manager, market development with Panasonic.

However, the challenge to date has been the inability of most laptop computers to survive the harsh working environment of a maintenance shop or a truck cab. That is changing, with an expanding selection of rugged computers becoming available, which have been designed to perform in even the most punishing environments.

Panasonic has recently published a white paper exploring the advantages of rugged computers in the shop environment.

Entitled *The role of rugged mobile computing in overhaul, service and maintenance operations*, the white paper contends that fleet operators are turning to rugged computers to improve efficiencies in the shop and to enhance the productivity of technicians.

"In recent years there have been efforts to deploy laptop computers into service bay environments to improve productivity. This has reduced foot traffic between productive workshop activities in the actual service bay and centralized computers that are shared by all the mechanics in the facility," the white paper reported.

But just how rugged are the latest generation of rugged computers?

We caught up with Panasonic's Presler at this year's Technology and Maintenance Council meetings. He demonstrated the durability of one of the company's Toughbooks by dropping it on the cement floor from about three feet off the ground.

It seemed none the worse for wear when he retrieved it. Alternatively, Presler said you can drop a 2-lb steel ball on its tempered glass screen from the same height without harming it.

"This is a tool designed for the technician," stressed Presler. "It's a tool, it's rugged, it's tough and it's highly durable."

Panasonic's Toughbooks are protected by a magnesium alloy case and feature shock-mounted hard drives.

The screen comes with a replaceable film that protects it from grease and grime.

Psion Teklogix also manufactures rugged computers, both vehicle-mounted and handheld systems. James Poulton, director of product development for the company told *Truck West* that the durability of a computer is measured in various ways.

"The ability to withstand drops to concrete is one measure of ruggedness," he explained. "Another is the IP (ingress protection) rating – the ability of the device to withstand various forms of matter ingress into the housing."

Poulton said new devices are subjected to at least 26 drops on a concrete surface from various angles. The height ranges from four feet for entry-level products right up to six or seven feet for ultra-rugged models.

"The processors, radios, antennas, displays – they all have to emerge in perfect working order," he said.

The IP measures resistance to two forms of matter: dust and water. An IP rating of 54 (five-four), for instance, means the computer scores a five out of seven for dust exposure and a four out of eight when it comes to water resistance.

To put it in perspective, a score of seven in the dust category means the device is "absolutely sealed" explained Poulton, and a best possible score of eight in the water category means it can survive prolonged submersion in two metres of water.

If you're choosing a computer for a shop environment, dust is likely more of a concern than water exposure, Poulton noted. For vehicle-mounted computers, which may be attached to forklifts or service trucks, long-term shock and vibration resistance should also be considered.

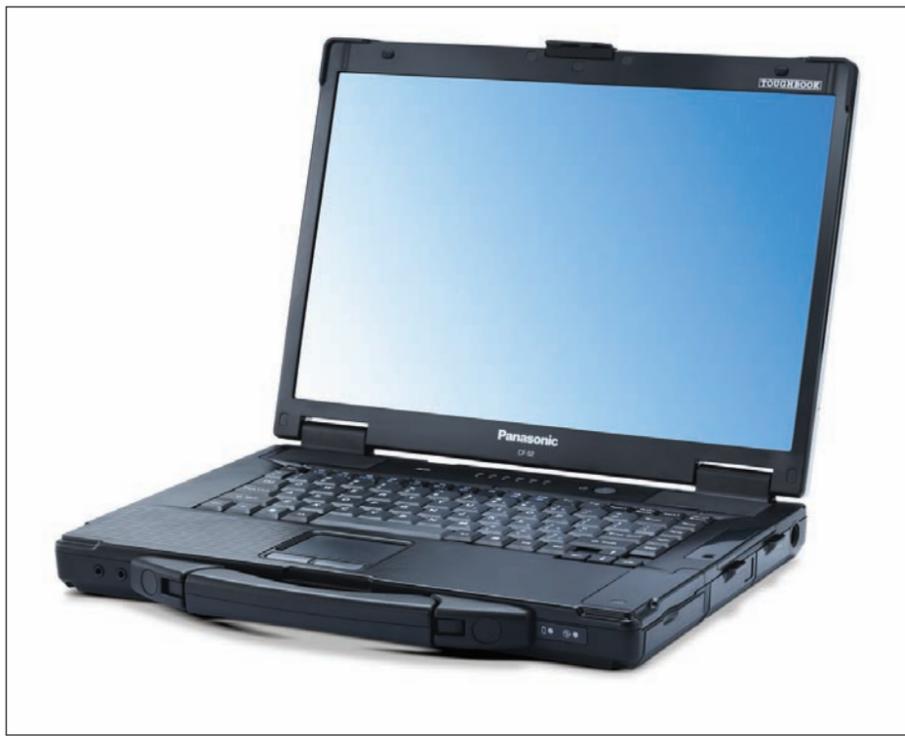
"Shock and vibrations are much more ongoing," Poulton pointed out.

The durability of today's rugged computers is one reason for their more widespread adoption into maintenance operations. Another is their increased capabilities.

"Handheld computers are packing incredible amounts of processing power relative to their size," said Poulton, noting even everyday devices such as a BlackBerry or PDA are becoming

'Handheld computers are packing incredible amounts of processing power relative to their size.'

James Poulton, Psion Teklogix



DURABLE: Rugged computers feature a tough external shell and shock-mounted components so they can survive being dropped on the shop floor.

more powerful.

Fleets and maintenance operations that are making the switch to rugged mobile computing solutions are generally achieving a payback in under a year, Poulton said.

However, there are many variables at play so it will vary from operation to operation.

In addition to having the ability to improve technician productivity, the computers boast a longer life than their traditional non-rugged counterparts.

Instead of a three-year life-cycle, Poulton said most of Psion Teklogix's customers are achieving five- and seven-year life spans from their rugged computers.

Panasonic's white paper noted that notebooks and PCs have an annual failure rate of 15% in their first year of use climbing to 22% by year four. Problem areas

generally include: motherboards; hard drives; latches; hinges; keyboards; and screens – each of which are protected on rugged devices.

When choosing a system, it's also important to consider the future requirements of the device.

"Make sure you choose a platform that meets your needs today, but has some flexibility to meet your unknown needs going forward," suggested Poulton. This is especially important, given the longer life-cycles of rugged computers.

Technological advancements – the emergence of RFID for instance – may require you to upgrade your system before it has reached the end of its useful life.

"The mobile market is so dynamic – changes can occur within your business that you didn't even initiate, so you should future-proof the solution, allow it to evolve," Poulton suggested.

That way, when an upgrade or a new capability is launched, you can simply download or install the new module and keep your system up-to-date.

Some well-known companies have begun making the transition from traditional computing systems to rugged mobile devices. Navistar, for instance, has equipped nearly 1,000 of its International Truck dealerships with Panasonic's Toughbooks. The computers are used on the shop floor to diagnose mechanical problems.

They have built-in wireless Internet capabilities, so technicians can access details such as vehicle history, warranty coverage and parts availability.

In Panasonic's white paper, Gerry Beronja, director of global marketing with Snap-on Diagnostics said Web accessibility is one more reason fleets and shops will continue to make the switch.

"The trend is quickly moving towards having access to a PC in every service bay," he said. "As applications and automotive re-programming software move to the Web, technicians need to have access to the Web while at the fender of the vehicle. Rugged notebooks provide a way to connect to vehicles (via wireless and USB connections) while getting information from the Web. Service information is critical to technicians. This is especially true as manufacturer and aftermarket equipment providers move away from CD and DVD solutions to Web solutions." □



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BOWMANVILLE, Ont. – On March 31, a truck driver made headlines after driving 20 km in the wrong direction on Yellowhead Trail in Edmonton before plunging to his death over an overpass. The incident was captured on camera by another motorist and the resulting viral video led to speculation about the 25-year-old driver's intent.

While some called it a malicious plot or suicide attempt, his family defended the victim, saying he had Type 1 diabetes and sometimes suffered hypoglycemic reactions which caused seizures and blackouts. Though the final toxicology reports won't be released for several more weeks, the accident opened the debate on the role of mandatory medicals drivers must undergo to be deemed "safe" for the road. Was the accident an isolated event or could it have been prevented through medical intervention? *Truck West* stopped by the Fifth Wheel Truck Stop in Bowmanville, Ont. to see if



Truck Stop Question

Adam Ledlow
Managing Editor

Are truck driver medical examinations strict enough?

drivers think medical examinations for truck drivers are strict enough.

John Pell, an O/O with his own company, J&R Trucking, says that truckers shouldn't be permitted to operate while on most medications.

"With some medication, you get dizzy, you hallucinate, and you lose your coordination. I think truck drivers shouldn't take any medication other than an Aspirin," he says.

"(The industry needs) new standards for medication (and) doctors that follow rules, because it's life or death out there. And when a doctor

let's an (unfit) patient go, he's the killer."



Brian Reed

Brian Reed, a driver with Kriska Transportation out of Prescott, Ont., says the outcome of a driver's medical is based heavily on the individual conducting the exam.

"The medical itself is strict enough but a lot of it is left up to the physician that's doing the examination. It all depends on whether the physician himself lets it slide," he says.



Don Knight

Don Knight, drives for JP Transport, based out of Aubigny, Man. He says that while examinations are thorough enough, there are still many truckers driving in ill health.

"Those who can't fit in the booth at the restaurant or have trouble getting behind the wheel, how those people get passed at the doctor's office is amazing," Knight says.



Pat Bailey

Pat Bailey, a driver with Kriska Transportation, based out of Mississauga, Ont., says that while truckers suffering from diseases like diabetes shouldn't be banned from driving altogether, they should perhaps get themselves to the doctor more often than required.

"I think (the case of the Edmonton driver) is just one that slipped through the cracks (but) if he was diabetic, he should have been aware of what was going on with himself, right?"



Michael O'Connor

Michael O'Connor, who drives for TST Truckload Express out of Mississauga, Ont., says that while the Edmonton crash, if caused by diabetes, was probably an isolated case, it should be a combined effort between drivers and physicians to keep roads safe.

That said, O'Connor believes that a lack of decent medical coverage in the industry may discourage drivers from getting the treatment they need – often to disastrous ends. □

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